

Measures Against Crime

second time but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Lafontaine-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I should like to make a preliminary remark concerning the bill before us, Bill C-83, as an initial clarification which will prove necessary in the light of my later comments on the spirit of the proposed measures.

When it is time to vote on third reading, I shall probably vote in favour of Bill C-83, even if I have serious reservations as to the merits of certain clauses, because it completes Bill C-71 which the House has already considered and because it is a valuable and necessary updating of our criminal justice and correctional tools.

Indeed, as many of my colleagues have already pointed out, particularly the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), most of the subjects covered are not new legal points, they only result from the normal development of existing statutes. Whether it be amendments to the Protection of Privacy Act, the updating of the rules governing custody and parole, the approval in principle of public inquiries on organized crime, the clarification of the status of dangerous criminals or even the new set of measures on gun control and the regulations governing gun users, owners, one could almost say that we have here the substance of a housekeeping bill. This is why the best forum to debate such legislation would be the parliamentary committee and I hope that the second reading debate will not be too long so that the discussion can be really constructive and the few litigious or controversial elements, specially in the field of wiretapping, can be studied with the attention they deserve by the persons concerned in the presence of experts from the Department of Justice and witnesses or resource persons wishing to appear before the committee.

Even if a few hon. members had some reservations about the combination of the five issues covered, I do not think that on this sole basis we should object at this first stage of the parliamentary study of Bill C-83, and this with all due respect for those who hold opposite views. In this regard, most hon. members have already approved in principle the proposed measures. And the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) himself, having clearly said that criminal justice instruments like the Criminal Code and legislation concerning parole, the Penitentiary Act and other related statutes were changing constantly I think that the suggestions made by hon. members could be and should be considered by the parliamentary committee to help this government fight efficiently the alarming increase in crime in Canada.

For those reasons and only those, I support Bill C-83.

Where I do not agree however is where Bill C-83 is made to say what it does not say and is made to do what it cannot do. Bills C-83 and C-84 have been given the pompous and mistaking title of "Peace and security program for protection against violent crime".

The first question that comes to my mind is WHY?

Why give so much importance to a mere readjustment of the internal administration of criminal justice instruments, readjustment long since advocated by the Parole

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

Board, the Commissioner of Penitentiaries and, the different police corps at all jurisdiction levels?

Why? And the first answer which comes to my mind, shocking and brutal, is that they have tried to coat the bitter pill, Bill C-84, abolishing capital punishment, with what may seem to be and is effectively a tightening of the Criminal Code. Bill C-83, Mr. Speaker, is an exercise in marketing Bill C-84.

Without any intention of judging the merit of Bill C-84, which will come up for discussion later, a discussion impassioned to one's liking, I suppose, if we really want to make people and their elected representatives believe that through the measures proposed in Bill C-83 we can effectively and efficiently stop the thrust of violent crime in this country, I apologize, but we are trying to deceive the public by means of a sophisticated exercise in organized camouflage. Indeed without referring to the overly narrow approach taken in this struggle by the program in question, I agree with the comments of Jean-Claude Leclerc of *Le Devoir*, who said in an article entitled: "The illusory protection obtained by life imprisonment", I quote:

● (2010)

... it will be easier to multiply repressive measures than to cover the penitentiary system in the changing process that is required and without which, when the next crime occurs, the public will ask for capital punishment to be reinstated.

As regards the peace and security program itself, and particularly the booklet which features the program highlights and which was circulated by the Department of Justice, one may see with astonishment and incredulity that crime prevention is not given much importance: three tiny paragraphs that cover a quarter of a page, a third of which concerns the defensible space, that is to say:

Marked efforts to better understand the matter of reinforcement of possible crime targets, as well as that of the environment design. Strategy to increase the community resistance towards crime.

Anyone who is seriously involved in an over-all effort to control crime must consider in a comprehensive manner all the aspects of the criminal process, from the causes of the first offence to the reasons for repeated offences, and this includes different concepts, whether it be crime causes, police investigation and indictment, the judicial process including conviction and sentencing, penitentiary life in which penalty and rehabilitation are opposed, and finally, reintegration into society with, in most cases, the rejection of the former inmate.

Well, the peace and security program falls within this framework. Basically, it deals only with penalty and implementation of sentence, without really trying to come to grips with the causes of crime and the roots of community distrust toward offenders and former inmates.

An organized program of crime control should take into account all factors involved in the anti-social or asocial behaviour of some individuals; it should therefore bear on crime causes, social and police prevention, sentencing, penitentiary reform, treatment, social rehabilitation, information and community involvement.

Let us begin at the start, with the definition of delinquency. It was on the assumption that no simplistic definition of delinquency and its features are of any value that