

*Government Orders*

We need to provide the necessary training and work experience in the institutions so that, on release, the persons who have been incarcerated are able to take their place as working partners in our communities. In fact, I am safe in saying that some of the programs that the government has have been worth while in that regard, but we need more of them and not further cuts as we have been having for the last few years.

I encourage the Solicitor General to follow up on that aspect of this bill instead of dealing entirely with legal, technical changes.

**Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca):** Madam Speaker, I would like to say at the outset that in speaking to this particular bill, I am handicapped by the fact that I actually have some knowledge about this subject. Beyond that, my comments will be relatively minor but somewhat concerned about the lack of focus of this bill.

First of all, we have to understand in dealing with this particular problem that we are really defining class. I have spent seven years of my life working in prisons as an administrator, as well as outside of prisons as a probation officer supervising paroles. It was some 30 years ago when I was last directly involved in institutions and services on parole and probation and frankly things have changed very little since that time.

We currently have a situation where money counts when it comes to criminal justice. The people who end up in jail are generally poor. Poor people make up the vast numbers of our population in prisons that cost us so dearly out of our annual budgets.

We also have the victims of crime who are generally overlooked except for lip-service with regard to rehabilitative services or support services after they have been victims of serious crimes.

• (1150)

The most obvious, glaring lack of service is in prevention. We have in this country tens of thousands of young people whom we hear about during Question Period who are not even adequately fed, let alone nurtured and sufficiently concerned about to ensure a minimum of criminal activity as a cause of that neglect. I am not suggesting that poverty is the only reason for criminal activity, but I am saying that a poverty background breeds the potential for the development of alienation which ultimately leads to criminal activity.

We have the phenomenon of a breakdown of a family

and we lament about it, saying that we wish we could return to the old values. Wishing for the return of those values and actually going back to them are two different things. The reality is that a significant number of families in poverty are single parent families. Single parent families, by their very nature, are marred by the fact that one person, usually a young woman, is responsible for not only raising the children, but being the bread-winner and also the home-maker at the same time. For a significant number of these people, the only means of income should they wish to spend the time with their family, is welfare.

We actually have institutionalized in North America a welfare family system that is known in the United States as an under-class and here in Canada just blandly as the poor.

We have talked many times about altering the social welfare system, the support systems, in terms of economics for these families, but we have done very little to radically alter the kind of structures that these people must operate in.

The consequences of our neglect of the economic and social problems relative to this group of people is that it is a breeding ground for a continuous supply of deviant behaviour by very young people.

In the past we used the classic orphanage or training school as an arena within which we sent young boys or young girls for "correction". We have been shocked to learn, over the last few years, the response to some of the activities of the training schools that are not just confined to religious communities, but are actually the practices, tragically and unfortunately, in many state-run training schools.

We have now evidence of the continuation of these kinds of problems by seeing in every large urban area very young women, ages 15, 16 and 17 and younger, whose only economic source to survive in our society is prostitution. I must say, tragically, not only just young women, but young men as well. The free enterprise system allows the only marketable thing that they have to be marketed on city streets right across this country.