

Criminal Code

Reparation from the offender to the victim must be given priority. Services must be provided to help victims recover.

Officials concerned with national policies on victims in Britain, Switzerland, and India are already studying the Manitoba Bill to which I referred earlier, which is the first to implement the United Nations resolution in a local jurisdiction with a committee which has real teeth. In other words, it would have real powers to act in this very critical matter dealing with victims of various crimes. However, it covers only those principles that relate to provincial jurisdiction, and even then it does not deal with crime prevention or state compensation.

This leads us to ask what the federal Minister can do besides talk on the initiative which we are discussing here today. Most victims first contact the police when in a serious situation. Any action to help victims should start there. The federal Government's responsibility for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police gives it direct influence over one in three police officers in Canada in the best regarded police force in the world.

There is no question that the RCMP is the most respected police force anywhere in the world and one of which all Canadians can feel very proud. As a western Member of Parliament I know that it is traditional to have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police represent us in terms of law and order. Whenever there is a special event to honour an officer who has carried out his or her duties above and beyond the normal call of duty, the response from the community is overwhelming. I am proud to be able to say that and to be part of a Parliament which has seen fit to have such an outstanding police force.

The federal Government could set an example of how police should respond to victims by establishing public guidelines for the RCMP. These might specify how the officer would give the victim information on services and remedies available as well as how the victim will be informed as the investigation continues.

At the National Police College, where senior officers from Canada and abroad are educated on strategies for the future, the police leaders for the next decade could be committed to treating victims as people, too.

In 30 U.S. states, the judge is required to consider restitution and usually will study a report on the losses suffered by the victim.

One could go on and on to talk about the need for seeking ways and means of offering justice for the victims of crimes. This legislation is a step in the right direction.

As the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) has said on a number of occasions, it is a step in the right direction, and we are pleased to be associated with it.

The Hon. Member for Burnaby was a master of the content of the Bill, having been part of the drafting process. He was almost intimately knowledgeable about every aspect of the Bill. He indicated to me that had he been here it would have been quite appropriate to have one Member speak this afternoon. Since he was unable to be here, some of my colleagues have seen fit to make appropriate comments with regard to the development of the legislation.

With that, I will simply say that we are in favour of the Bill and believe it is a useful step in the right direction. We support it enthusiastically.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 6.12 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock.

The House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.
