

*Oral Questions***CRIMINAL CODE**

REFERRAL OF SUBJECT OF PROSTITUTION TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General while he is still the acting Minister of Justice. Last Monday the National Action Committee on the Status of Women urged the government to move quickly to pass, with the needed amendments, Bill C-53, the long overdue legislation overhauling Canada's archaic and ineffective rape laws. At the same time many residents of Canadian cities, including particularly those in the west end of Vancouver, want effective action to deal with the problem of street prostitution in residential neighbourhoods.

Is the government prepared to accommodate both of these important objectives by making an early reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs so that it can set up a special subcommittee dealing with all aspects of prostitution? Such a committee could then sit at the same time as the full Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is dealing with the sexual offences legislation.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I attended that meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and spoke to the representatives on that subject. I reminded them on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Justice, that the establishment of a special subcommittee on that subject would not be necessary in view of his suggestion that the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs consider that issue at the same time as it was dealing with the provisions contained in Bill C-53. The government would very much welcome full consideration by members of the committee of the problem of street prostitution, and the minister responsible suggested that the proper place for it could well be that meeting and those meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Roberson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, the minister is trying to work both sides of the street on this question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

HARASSMENT OF INNOCENT WOMEN

Mr. Svend J. Roberson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, as the minister knows, many organizations and individuals, including Mayor Mike Harcourt of Vancouver, national women's organizations, and chiefs of police, have demanded that the government put an end to the double standard which now exists in our prostitution laws whereby a "John" who harasses an innocent woman for purposes of prostitution cannot be prosecuted. Will the minister at least assure the House that his government will move quickly to put an end to this blatant discrimination against women and change the law to allow the harassing customer—the "John"—to be charged under the same circumstances as a prostitute is now being charged?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the government cannot move any more quickly on this matter than the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs does. Because of the work stoppage in the House there were no meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Kempling: We were there.

Miss MacDonald: Where were you?

Mr. Kaplan: Hon. members should not be seeking to evade the responsibility which the minister has suggested ought to be that of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to look at these questions and to try to come to some sensible conclusions about them.

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EMPLOYMENT

SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Since August of last year 216,000 jobs have been lost in the Canadian economy. Of those jobs 138,000 jobs were lost by young people in the 15 to 24 age group. Given that young people are bearing the lion's share of this recession, how does the minister justify the fact that only 53,000 students will be employed this summer under the summer student employment program whereas two summers ago, when the situation was much less serious, some 70,000 students benefited?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I welcome the question, and I want to bring to the attention of the hon. member the particular training programs which have been announced by the minister lately. If the hon. member will show a little patience he will also hear subsequent announcements in relation to summer employment and other summer undertakings which will be helpful to students.

Mr. Thacker: Madam Speaker, we know last year \$120 million was provided. This year an additional \$20 million has been provided. There has been a bit of public response. The government has kicked in another \$20 million to bring the figure up to last year's level. There has been a total lack of consideration for the young people of this country.

REPAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Secretary of State. A good many of these 138,000 former students who have lost jobs are in the process of paying back Canada students loans, and interest on those loans is now being charged at the current rate. What is the minister doing to see that those students do not have judgments entered against