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ing or when it orders reparation or redress for harm done or sets in place measures to bring about the rehabilitation of offenders.

Parliament's role to date in this process has been too often limited to setting maximum penalties for specific offences rather than dealing with the policy objectives of the sentencing process. It was clearly time Parliament put its collective mind to describing the kind of criminal justice system it wants to forge for Canadians.

This occasion was given to us in the sentencing bill, Bill C-41, introduced by the Minister of Justice. Of all the representation we receive, the most heart rending, as all members would agree, is the representation from victims. Victims of crimes often feel their immediate emotional, financial and physical needs are not being addressed.

The criminal justice system may appear at times to be overly concerned about the court process and the punishment of the offender and insufficiently concerned about victim needs.

Parliament has had the opportunity in this session to debate an important bill touching several aspects of the way victims are treated within the criminal justice system. With the sentencing bill, Bill C-41, Parliament had for the first time an opportunity to address the purpose and principles of criminal sentencing. The bill brought together the purpose and principles of sentencing, procedure and evidence and the various sanctions the courts may impose in a form that represents the collective view of Parliament and which touches on many issues of vital importance to victims.

Let me give some examples. Bill C-41, recently passed in the House, specifies that if an offence is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate it will be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing. The statement specifies that if an offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factor, the court shall consider that the motivation be an aggravating factor.

• (1545)

Numerous recommendations have been made respecting breach of trust for offences involving violence against women and other vulnerable persons, including children.

A 1993 survey by Statistics Canada demonstrated that almost one-half of women reported experiencing violence during their lifetime by men known to them. In too many cases positions of trust were exploited, for example by parents against their children or by a physician against his or her patient.

In 1984 the Badgley committee called for the protection of children from persons they already know and may trust. Bill C-41 states that where there is evidence that the offender in committing an offence abused a position of trust or authority in relation to the victim, it shall also be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing.

All these changes respond to concerns raised by community groups, victims, and others about hate motivated violence and the plight of victims.

Bill C-41 took other important steps. The statement of purpose and principles specifically indicates that objectives for sentencing include the provision of reparations for harm done to victims or to the community and the promotion of a sense of responsibility in offenders in acknowledgement of the harm to victims and to the community. It goes further. Specific provision is made to ensure that any information provided by victims is considered during hearings held under section 745 of the Criminal Code.

A new set of measures respecting restitution, developed co-operatively with the federal government and our provincial colleagues, is set out in the bill. A priority for restitution is set out in the bill. If a court finds it appropriate to award both a fine and restitution, the priority shall go to restitution.

The House added a provision as well respecting restitution, stating that in the case of bodily harm or threat of bodily harm to an offender's spouse or child, the court may order restitution for expenses incurred by that person as a result of moving out of the offender's household, as well as for temporary housing, food, child care and transportation. Provision is made to ensure that restitution orders can be enforced by the civil courts.

The Criminal Code will specifically state that any restitution ordered by a criminal court will not limit the victim's right to sue for damages in the civil court.

The House of Commons participated in an important debate involving the status of victims in the criminal justice system. Significant changes were brought to our criminal law, aimed at improving the situations of victims in the system. The government and the House are concerned about victims and have demonstrated that concrete action at the legislative level is a priority of the government.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have difficulty trying to relate to the government that the legislation it plays with is not a full implementation of what is necessary.

For example, when the Young Offenders Act was changed in the House we said all along that the government was not changing the law to suit the real world out there. We wanted to change a number of issues. That did not happen. Many of the victims rights groups out there said time and time again that the government was too soft on its legislation. Yet government members stand in the House, as my colleague did just now, and say they are working on it and it is coming along. *