

Supply

which prevailed in Quebec during the 40s and 50s, will enable producers to show programs which respect women. For the enlightenment of Hon. Members who have much to learn about women, I would like to give a short definition of pornography.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, pornography is not a question of nudity but simply of women being treated degradingly and humiliatingly in a relationship of dominator to dominated, while eroticism involves equal adult partners in no humiliating circumstances. I believe that it is important in the present debate that we understand exactly what we are getting into. Who applies our laws? Who applies the present Criminal Code? Who interprets the definition of pornography? It is the provincial governments, male attorneys, male judges and male policemen. Mr. Speaker, I believe that if there had been equal representation of both sexes in our legislative assemblies in Canada, we would long ago have passed laws which would quite simply have prevented such a situation from developing.

I shall deal with another current issue, in my capacity of member of the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. The Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) has raised the issue of soliciting on Vancouver streets. I recognize that it is difficult to solve this problem without tampering with the freedom of movement of individuals and individual liberties. But what the mayor of Vancouver and the Hon. Member for Calgary West are asking us to do to help solve this problem is pass a law to amend the Criminal Code and empower the law enforcement authorities to arrest, imprison and condemn prostitutes, thereby committing an even more serious crime because they are the victims of the system Mr. Speaker. Moreover, the mayor of Vancouver has very naively told us: "To make an arrest, we simply must have undercover agents, and of course, they are policemen. You can imagine that the customer is very seldom arrested since he is always a policeman."

On the other hand, my colleague for Burnaby, who has very avant-garde ideas, simply suggests that we legalize prostitution at large and adopt a laissez-faire attitude. The government would be nothing less than responsible for brothels. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that such a solution is quite unrealistic or shows a profound ignorance, because, as I understand, this approach has been used in France, and we are all aware of the problems now facing French women who are beaten and mistreated, and the problem of procurers and of women being victimized by the system has not yet been eliminated.

My suggestion to the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is quite simply to amend the Criminal Code and put an end to prostitution, which is essentially a degrading way to sell an individual, by simply providing for a criminal trial and summary conviction for the customer. My colleagues from the Opposition who support private enterprise know that it is a matter of offer and demand. I believe that if there were no demand, there would be no offer, there would be no more poor women on the streets, there would no longer be any prostitutes on the sidewalks of Vancouver and women would no longer be

harassed on the sidewalk if the customers were arrested. We could then have a situation where undercover police officers impersonating prostitutes would arrest customers. For hundreds of years, Mr. Speaker, legislators have only sought ways and means to eliminate prostitution from public places and rid the world of this degrading trade which is being plyed most everywhere behind drawn curtains . . . of course I am not referring to the curtains in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize for this digression. There is also this major step which this Liberal government took during the Christmas holiday to curb sexual harassment within the Civil Service, setting a procedure whereby an official found guilty of abusing his authority could be forced to resign.

[English]

I would also like to discuss the matter of Indian women because I worked on the subcommittee for two weeks last summer. I heard over 100 hours of testimony from Indian and Inuit women throughout the country. I was surprised that my colleagues from the Opposition, both Members of the Conservative Party and Members of the NDP, were there to vote against the report. The report recommended that we amend Section 12(1)(b) and restore the rights of women who have been deprived of those rights for the last 100 years. Those Members were there and they voted against that. Why? Because they were afraid of the Indian men who would vote against them.

• (1620)

When we talk about rights, we do not talk about the electorate and votes, we talk about fundamental rights and the right to be equal.

I am surprised the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) did not outline the problem of women in prison in her motion. When she was in Cabinet and making decisions, why were the programs not available for the women in the Kingston federal penitentiary? Why were these programs to give people the opportunity for rehabilitation and retraining given by a federal Liberal Government?

Miss MacDonald: Where are they now? Come back and see how it is working.

Mrs. Hervieux-Payette: Why is it that provincial Conservative Governments are not signing agreements in order that women may stay in their own Provinces and thus receive the subsidy being granted by the federal Government? We have been waiting for months for Provinces like British Columbia to sign these agreements so that women can move from Kingston to British Columbia and be close to their families.

I am proud of the record of our balance sheet. We now have a report which was voted for by the Liberals. The Conservatives and NDP were against the amendment of Section 12(1)(b). We have adopted Bill C-82 regarding widows of veterans. We have Bill C-127. It is not our best record because