

*Government Orders*

What will our society, which claims to have the best health care program in the world, do to an innocent young person, who could be my child or yours and who is influenced by others into using soft drugs? Our society will give that young person a criminal record and give him a jail sentence. So much for our social ethic and our value system.

Whereas enforcement measures must be maintained and even strengthened to fight drug traffickers—those merchants of dreams who make such fortunes—victims of these despicable people must be helped, and that means being lenient and offering education, prevention and rehabilitation programs, as well as health care.

Is imprisonment an adequate solution, considering that 70 per cent of federal penitentiaries inmates use illicit drugs? Is making our laws more stringent a good idea, considering that numerous studies have repeatedly shown that fear of punishment or harshness is an insignificant deterrent among drug users?

When comparing risks of punishment with risks to health for drug users, concerns for health clearly win out.

I believe that Canadians are asking us to take effective drug control measures. To do so properly, we must reduce both the demand for and the supply of illicit drugs in a balanced way. A good approach will combine health, prevention and rehabilitation measures, and legal sanctions, too. Bill C-7, the amounts spent on the Canada Drug Strategy and their allocation do not effectively provide this balanced control.

That is why we must reject Bill C-7, review the Canada Drug Strategy and use the results of recent research to update our approach. Above all, we must give priority to values and concepts that emphasize a better quality of life through better public health.

You know, Madam Speaker, it is more mature to admit one's mistakes than to stubbornly repeat them. Therefore I call on the Hon. Minister of Health and the government to withdraw Bill C-7 and start all over. I assure them of my full co-operation in this.

*[English]*

**Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for a very eloquent speech. She made some very strong points.

However, the member should know that the drug strategy is also tied in with this bill and that 70 per cent of the money we now spend on looking at drugs is spent on the drug strategy which is the health component. It is the part that looks at prevention and ways of treating and rehabilitating people who are addicted.

I agree with many of the things the hon. member said about public policy and understanding the root causes of addiction and of people using drugs.

• (1555)

One must also be aware of the number of people who prey on the vulnerable in our society. We have to find a way of dealing with the people who traffic in drugs, who prey on our young people and make them use drugs, knowing full well what they are doing by bringing them into an addiction that is very difficult for them to get out of.

This bill is aimed at some of those people. I wondered if the hon. member felt that that was also needed as well as rehabilitation and treatment.

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Picard:** Madam Speaker, I would like to say to the hon. member that I have no intention of not criminalizing drug traffickers; it was not what I meant. Where I do not agree with this bill is that the 500,000 young people arrested so far for possession of drugs were given criminal records, fines and jail sentences and are now being turned into users and criminals.

What I ask from this bill is that this policy be reviewed to make it more helpful to young people, who are not criminals but users. We should bring in policies to encourage them to get treated for their addictions, to rehabilitate themselves and to become good citizens. I condemn Bill C-7 because it does not put forward such policies. What I find strange is that this bill comes from the Minister of Health and yet deals only with criminal offences.

*[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I see no one rising for debate. Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Call in the members.

• (1600)

*And the bells having rung:*