

Criminal Code

lem. The majority report also dealt with the issue of public places including automobiles since a great many of these transactions take place in automobiles. As well, it recommended that both the prostitute and the customer may be charged, something which is of course essential and for which there has been general agreement.

The Justice Committee recommendations also dealt with the issue of juvenile prostitution, an issue which, according to the Minister of Justice will be dealt with in a separate Bill after more consultation with the parties affected. We all share the wish to protect these children rather than to penalize them and we wish to ensure that whatever steps are taken are humane and not punitive.

The recommendations of the Justice Committee were ignored and the Liberal Government brought in Bill C-53, a Bill which of course was toothless. The Bill did acknowledge the need to charge clients as well as prostitutes but since we could not charge prostitutes under the old Act, there was no particular point in trying to charge clients under legislation which could not be effectively enforced. At that time, the Fraser Committee was set up and of course there was a delay while its report was being made, during which time the problem spread to other cities.

In 1984, the residents of my riding formed the Shame the Johns Committee. It was a source of some pride to me that the citizens would continue to defend their neighbourhoods but at the same time it was a concern to me because, in the confrontation between the neighbours and the hookers and pimps, there was, of course, an atmosphere conducive to violence and I did not feel that people should have to risk their lives in order to defend their neighbourhoods. However, the Shame the Johns Committee movement spread. I walked with the Shame the Johns Committee in Halifax, a city which had the same problem in a historic neighbourhood, and such committees have been organized in other cities.

The point I would like to make is that this problem is not confined only to Vancouver. It is a problem that has spread across the country. It is a problem which has frustrated people such that they have gone from making complaints to the organization of community groups. What I fear now is that if the House does not deal with this issue, debate the issue, make recommendations and pass the Bill so that we have new laws in place, the formation of vigilante groups could lead to incidents of violence. Last weekend in Vancouver, there was such an incident, an incident which should spread fear among all legislatures regarding what happens when people take bad laws into their own hands.

I am suggesting that we proceed in a lawful manner by processing this legislation. We should examine it. Opposition Members should offer improvements. I beg opposition Members not to filibuster this Bill, to stop its process or to create an environment in which citizens are forced into the streets to defend their neighbourhoods because then anarchy prevails and the faith in legal institutions such as Parliament will break down. Right now what we have is an uncontrolled and unlimited problem. While this legislation will not resolve all the

problems, it will deal with the issue of street soliciting in residential neighbourhoods. That will give us a good basis on which we may continue to work together to resolve some of these other issues.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a question regarding a statement which she made in the latter part of her speech. She suggested that we should pass this Bill expeditiously because if we did not do so, we would find people taking the law into their own hands and perpetrating violent acts on society. It would seem to me that if that were the rationale used for the passage of laws across this country, it would in fact lead to anarchy.

Miss Carney: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that it is a Liberal Member who has brought that proposition forward because it was the Liberal Government that delayed and delayed on this kind of legislation until what was a fairly small, localized problem had spread right across the country. It is because of the delay in passing this legislation, because of the blight of neighbourhoods, because of daycare centres with little kids playing in the shadow of hookers, and because of all of the activity in the churchyards that people in defence of their own neighbourhoods got together and served notice that if the Government of Canada cannot deal with this problem, they will.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the Minister's rationale for suggesting to Parliamentarians that we should expeditiously pass this particular Bill for fear that if we did not pass it, society will be taken over by vigilante groups. That is a rationale that I do not understand and I would think that as a Parliamentarian, the Minister would find it very shocking that we should pass laws simply as a response to groups that could potentially become vigilante groups.

Miss Carney: Mr. Speaker, I accept the fact that the Liberal Member does not understand the situation. The Liberal Party never did and the Liberal Government did not either.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a question with respect to the report of the Fraser Commission to which she has made reference. In dealing with the question of prostitution, the report of the Fraser Commission pointed out that one of the causes of prostitution was economic roots and in particular, and I am now quoting from the report:

—the discrimination in employment that some gays, and gay males in particular appear to encounter. The latter problem is accentuated in the case of transsexual individuals who may find themselves virtually unemployable.

The Fraser Commission went on to recommend that the Government of Canada in conjunction with the Government of the provinces and Territories should strengthen both their moral and financial commitment to removing the economic and social inequalities between men and women and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The Canadian Human Rights Act should clearly be the appropriate piece of legislation to be amended in order to prevent discrimination against gays and lesbians, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This is a recommendation which has been made