

right of society to know the identity of the young offender.

Automatic transfers will absolve judges of having to make the difficult decision of whether or not it is proper to transfer a young offender to adult court. It will also create a uniform system in which a youth charged with murder will face the same sentence in Vancouver as in St. John's. In order to protect the young offender properly, I have stipulated that any young offender convicted of murder in adult court will not have to face the adult prison system until the age of 18, at which time he legally becomes an adult. Until that time, the youth shall serve his time in a facility currently used for the custody of youths in order to ensure the safety of the young offenders.

• (1710)

While many people may urge that the incidence of youth charged with murder is so small that changes to the Young Offenders Act are unwarranted, I can only say this to them: Just ask the victims' families about how they feel about people serving only three years for the murders of their loved ones. I can assure Hon. Members that the response would be that they do not feel that justice has been served.

Furthermore, the changes to the Act that I am seeking are necessary in order to reinstate public confidence in our judicial system. Potential young offenders must realize that society does not look favourably on the commission of illegal activities. Youths must learn to respect the criminal justice system, but if the Young Offenders Act remains unchanged, they will continue to laugh at it.

For those who say that nothing can be done for the victims of young offenders, I have this to say: We can do something for these victims. We can show that we have learned that youths who commit murder are entitled to receive stiff sentences. How many more senseless killings must occur before the Government realizes that the Young Offenders Act must be changed? Too many have perished already. This is why I am pressing for an immediate vote on Bill C-229, an Act to amend the Young Offenders Act. The changes to the Act must be implemented now so that Canadians will be assured that we can continue to live in a caring and safe society.

### *Young Offenders Act*

In closing, I want to thank you for listening to me, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge Hon. Members not to drown this Bill but to let it go to a legislative committee. Society deems that we need changes. We need them now, not a few years from now.

**Mr. Bob Horner (Mississauga West):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C-229 submitted by the Hon. Member for Scarborough—Agin-court (Mr. Karygiannis). There is no question that the issue underlying the Bill is one that we all must take seriously. I was therefore very pleased to hear of the commitment of the Government of Canada in the Speech from the Throne to thoroughly examine the Young Offenders Act and amend it as required.

While my words may be misinterpreted, I feel compelled to say that the issues posed by youth involved in the crime of murder are complex and defy simple solutions, so I fear that the attention that a few very sensationalized cases have attracted may make us feel compelled as legislators to silence the issue with quick amendments. In my opinion, Bill C-229 is a quick and ill thought out amendment.

Before we move to amend this legislation, I think it may be useful to stand back and reflect briefly on the process of reform leading up to the passage of the Young Offenders Act. I recall that the process of study and review of the previous Juvenile Delinquents Act commenced in the early 1960s and was actively continued throughout the 1970s with a Bill, several major reports and extensive consultation. What stands out in my mind particularly is the fact that Bill C-61, the Young Offenders Bill, was unanimously passed by the House of Commons in the spring of 1981.

While I do not wish to dwell on this, the point is that the overall approach of the Act was soundly endorsed, not only by Parliament, but by a broad cross-section of professional associations, interest groups and individuals involved in juvenile justice. While those provisions dealing with youth involved in murder may have since proven problematic for some provinces, any changes that we as Parliamentarians may contemplate should take into account the overall approach and philosophical underpinnings of the Act.

It is in this regard that one important aspect of the Hon. Member's Bill distresses me. The Bill addresses in two separate ways, as I understand it, the issue of appropriate sentences for youth charged with murder. The first would increase the sentence available to the youth court to five years less a day, whatever that might mean, but this disposition could only be ordered for 12 and 13 year olds. All other youth if charged with murder