

*Government Orders*

It is not a quick fix. By simply extending the sentences and removing the criminals from society, the problem of violence in our society is not being solved. It is manifestly clear that we are not doing that.

We support and always have supported the number one principle of public safety in the criminal justice system: to protect the innocent. We support this bill at second reading. We hope we can improve this bill at committee but we support it at second reading.

We also agree that rehabilitation is important. We agree with the principle that even violent offenders, if we think it is safe, should be gradually released into society if it is possible. In some instances it is not. The Clifford Olson case, I think, is a prime example. There are sometimes when we, regrettably, simply have to throw the key away, as they say, in the interest of public safety.

However, that is not true in every case. The door should be left a little open where it is possible to reform and rehabilitate. We also agree with the additional offences listed in Schedule I and Schedule II to include sexual offences involving children, arson, and serious drug offenders. I am not quite sure what is meant by serious drug offenders, whether it is a quantitative thing, the amount of money involved, or the size of the illicit drug empire.

These things have to be addressed with greater resolution.

While we are on the subject of drug offences, let us not forget that there is a certain hypocrisy in this country. We talk about illicit drugs, hard drugs, heroin, crack cocaine and so on that are devastating. They are devastating to youth in particular.

Let us not forget that tobacco, which is a drug, and alcohol, which is a drug, account for the deaths of 50,000 people a year in this country. Hard-line drugs account for the deaths of approximately 350 to 400 persons. I am not accusing the government of being hypocritical, or any previous government, but that is something that some government is going to have to look at one of these days. I have had some experience as well.

I am not cynical so much as I am perhaps a bit disappointed, because we do have some really basic social problems in our society and other societies that, of course, this bill does not address. It cannot address them, I suppose. But let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, where and

how violence begins in our society. Good heavens, the overwhelming majority of violent offenders in our society were born into violence. Their parents were violent. Their parents were either drug addicts or alcoholics, under-educated or non-educated or they were not raised by their parents. They were introduced to crime on the streets as teenagers or even younger. They became exposed to drugs and alcohol at an early age, illiterate, no respect for law and order or authority. These are the ones who end up in our prisons. They end up as serious violent offenders and we are left, of course, with legislating as to what we do with them and how we try to rehabilitate them.

We also, of course, have the problems of people born mentally ill, or people who become mentally ill. There is no legalistic safeguard against that except, of course, medical treatment. Then, of course, we have this whole growing problem in our society of guns, of weapons, and this is on the increase. Violent crime is on the increase in our country, and we have to do something about it. This bill goes part way toward doing something about treating the offenders as well as punishing the offenders.

I hope that the public who are watching today and the public who are reading our speeches or the editorial writers who write editorials will not confuse passing laws, statutes and regulations, with actually tackling the problems in society that create violence and that are acting as a momentum to the increase in violent crime. This bill will not do that, or it will do very little to prevent or to ameliorate that situation.

It seems that you cannot turn on television these days at any hour of the day without seeing violence portrayed on television, violence against women, sexual violence, violence against children. It seems that you cannot sell a program, you cannot get advertisers without that kind of story being portrayed in all its ugly graphics on television.

That is something else that knowledgeable people, experts, psychiatrists and psychologists in the field are telling us more and more, both in the United States and in Canada, that that kind of programming is bad for young people to be subjected to. Yet I do not see us regulating. I do not see this government or any other government bringing on stream regulations that would try to reduce that impact by regulating the kinds of programs that the young people in our country are subjected to today.