

Certainly, no resident of Mount Pleasant, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Halifax or the west end has suggested in his or her representations to the House that those forms of communication in a public place anywhere in Canada should subject one to a sentence of six months in prison. It is absolutely unbelievable.

In fact, that is what the Bill does. The question we must ask is, what should have been done to respond to the genuine concerns of the residents of communities such as Mount Pleasant? Let me come to what we in the New Democratic Party propose as an alternative—I emphasize alternative—to the short-term problem of nuisance and harassment.

As well as dealing with the question of the over reaching aspects of this Bill in terms of freedom of speech, I want to look at some of the other implications of the Bill. We, as Members of Parliament can sit here in the Chamber and feel very proud of ourselves that we are sweeping the prostitutes off the streets. We will sleep well at night, knowing that that low life is gone.

Well, the implications of this Bill do not deal with just residential concerns. They go far beyond that. As pointed out by one member of the Fraser Commission, while it is all well and good to sweep prostitutes off the street and out of sight, under the existing laws, where do they go? According to this Bill, not only are they swept off the street, they are swept out of any public place anywhere in the country. We are not just dealing with the nuisance of street soliciting, we are dealing with any form of communication for the purpose of prostitution in any public place, anywhere in Canada. Under existing laws, under bawdy house laws in particular and other laws, any activity in a private place involving prostitution on more than a couple of occasions makes that private place a bawdy house.

What the Government believes it is doing is eradicating prostitution from all public places. It is already a criminal activity in all private places. The Government is saying that it is prepared to eliminate prostitution in Canada. That is the effect of this Bill, Mr. Speaker. One has to state only the proposition to recognize how ludicrous it is.

● (1210)

I am sure all of us would seek the eradication of prostitution as our objective. It is a practice that degrades and exploits women and young people. The reality is, as was clearly recognized by the Fraser Commission, that social and economic changes, and those changes alone, have any hope of ending the scourge of prostitution, and until we come to grips with them we will not eliminate prostitution in Canada. What this Bill will do, in concert with the existing bawdy house laws which must be repealed, is to drive prostitutes directly underground.

Let us think of the implications of that for a moment. It will not be that much of a problem for the wealthy, for the call-girls, for the Wendy Kings whose clients are the wealthy, the establishment, the lawyers, the judges, the doctors and those who can afford to pick up the phone and phone the Wendy Kings, the call-girls. Their business will carry on as

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usual. But what about the others, Mr. Speaker? What about the kids on the street? What will this Bill do about the problem of young boys and girls on the streets? Not only does the Bill not address the problem of kids on the street, but it makes their plight worse. It means that kids can be charged as prostitutes and be thrown in jail or fined. Is that really the answer to the social tragedy of juvenile prostitution? Is that really what this Government is proposing as a serious response to the tragedy in our communities of kids who sell their bodies to survive?

No other answer has been put forward by this Government. Indeed, we see the spectre of provincial Governments shutting down existing services for juvenile prostitutes. The Senator Hotel in Vancouver at least gave kids a roof over their heads and got them off the streets and the people tried to train them for jobs. But what did the Social Credit Government do in British Columbia? It shut the project down.

This Bill does nothing whatsoever to deal with the problem of juvenile prostitution. In 1983, when we studied this problem, if there was one unanimous recommendation by the House of Commons Justice Committee, it was to take tough and effective measures to deal not with juveniles, kids, not to throw them in jail, but to deal with the customers of juvenile prostitution. Where in this Bill put forward by the Government is there any attempt to deal with the customers of juvenile prostitutes? Nowhere, Mr. Speaker. Instead, the effect of this Bill would throw kids in jail.

Mr. Crosbie: And their customers.

Mr. Robinson: For over a year the Government has been studying the recommendations of a major commission that dealt with the sexual abuse of children in Canada. I speak of the Badgley Commission Report. That report should have been acted on long ago. Only in this month is the Department of Justice finally sending out a series of questions and discussion papers asking for comment on the report. Where has the Government been for the last year? Why was that process of discussion and consultation not started immediately after the Badgley Commission Report was tabled? If the Government is serious about dealing with prostitution of young people, it should start dealing with some of the social and economic causes, including the taking of effective measures to deal with the sexual abuse of young people.

It has been argued that this Bill will be equal in that it will be applied to both customers and prostitutes. That is on paper, Mr. Speaker. The reality has been, I venture to suggest, very different.

In Ontario, for example, the police can charge both customers and prostitutes. The experience has shown clearly that prostitutes are charged overwhelmingly. In 80 per cent of the cases prostitutes, and not customers, are charged, despite the fact that the law is supposedly equal in its application.

What are some of the other effects of this sledge-hammer approach to prostitution put forward by the Government? In effect, it will put prostitutes through the old revolving door of arrests, fines, jail for those unable to pay fines, and then it will