

Entertainment Industry

problems associated with pornography, including pornographic depictions through the broadcast media.

Many Canadians have expressed their concerns, both to the Fraser Committee and through their Members of Parliament, about the increasingly violent content of television shows, rock music videos and phonograph records. This issue should no longer and must no longer be overlooked.

I realize that censorship in the media is a complex sensitive issue involving constitutional questions of division of powers between the federal and provincial Governments and determinations of what constitutes reasonable limits on the freedom of expression guaranteed by Section 2 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We are at present seeing co-operation between all levels of Government and among all federal Departments to combat the adverse effects of the pervasive burgeoning pornographic influence in our society.

We must also channel this co-operation into looking at the equally pervasive burgeoning depictions of violence in our society, the effects of which on our youth have not been adequately assessed to date.

I urge this House to give the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs the mandate to study the effects of pornographic or simply violent depictions and descriptions in videos, records, cassette tapes and compact disks, available for sale or rent or through the broadcast media.

By suggesting that I support this, I do not criticize nor condemn the industry that has built up in Canada with regard to rock music videos. It is an important industry and, in many cases, gives Canadian entertainers a vehicle to express their talents and to show their abilities. Certainly in no way would I want my support of this recommendation to be construed as an effort to detract from that viable industry, but instead to add to the credibility of that industry and its product by making sure that we can attempt to monitor exactly what the young people of this country are going to see as a result of watching our entertainers and entertainers from other countries in the presentation of their talents.

This study by the committee should include the question that has been introduced by the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi concerning consumer standards for rating and labelling in the entertainment industry. The recent increase in the numbers and popularity of the rock music videos viewed by so many of our Canadian youth warrants the attention of the Members of Parliament. I congratulate the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi for bringing the matter to our attention and introducing his Private Members' Motion so that we as Members of Parliament may address it. I hope that Members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs will be able to give this very serious issue the attention it warrants.

● (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Grisé (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, this motion was moved by the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Jardine) who, while representing the Northumberland-Miramichi riding, knows the Chambly riding very well, having lived there for several years. As the elected representative of the Chambly riding, I am pleased to tell the House what I think of this motion on a basic issue which affects Canadian people generally and, of course, my Chambly constituents. However, I would not waste the time of the House by discussing the substance of the motion which seeks to authorize the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to study various aspects of the pornography problem.

It's a fact that the pornography problem today is extremely serious and affects all Canadians, including my Chambly constituents.

We are all aware that this question is important and arouses much interest. I am convinced that my colleague's initiative stems from his conviction that a study of this aspect of pornography is necessary for the well-being of the Canadian public. Concerning the well-being of the Canadian public and, especially, that of my Chambly constituents, it is clear that through the Budget it has just tabled, our Government is trying to improve the well-being of this and future generations, since by reducing the deficit, it is automatically easing the burden our young people will have to bear tomorrow. It is therefore evident that the purpose of our Budget and this motion is to improve the well-being of our society, our population.

I do not intend to discuss the validity of this conviction, not because I lack strong feelings about it. Quite the contrary! Just like my fellow Canadians, recent events such as the publication of the Badgley report on child abuse, as well as the Fraser report on pornography and prostitution in Canada have caused me to reflect on the pornography issue.

During the next few minutes, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal generally with the pornography problem which, as I said earlier, is very serious. In fact, the Criminal Code of Canada makes it an offense to write, publish, distribute or possess obscene material. Of course, contrary to my friend the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme), I lack the necessary training and experience to address the House with ease and eloquence. But surely, Mr. Speaker, my comments now are quite relevant.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, a publication is deemed to be obscene if its main feature is the undue exploitation of sexual aspects of one or more subjects such as crime, horror, cruelty or violence. The Canadian courts have been using a test that reflects common moral standards to determine what must be viewed as "undue exploitation", based on what the Canadian public as a whole is willing to tolerate.