

ed in the city of Edmonton revealed that more than 25 shows which were dished up on a weekend by Edmonton TV stations depicted violence.

An hon. Member: Not on the French channel.

Mr. Mazankowski: Maybe we should turn on the French channel. Is it not reasonable to assume that those who are emotionally disturbed, immature or very impressionable could be adversely affected by this professionally-packaged violence? Are not our school children prime targets for the glamour of violence? Another survey conducted in a Canadian city revealed that for 72 per cent of the students, in a general way crime had a major impact on their activities and, furthermore, they felt that crime and violence on our television screens should be reduced. The overwhelming majority have confirmed that.

What about the problem of alcohol in our society, and the problem of drugs? They are not mentioned in this piece of legislation. Surely these are integral components of the crime picture, but no mention is made of them in this bill, not even in the slick promotional propaganda which these two ministers have packaged for the Canadian public.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: We have been presented with a professional public relations document, and a vast number of the people in this country are simply not buying it. I might go further and say that a lot of the contents of the emotional material are little more than emotional fluff. Moreover, in my view the material is based on biased statistics.

● (1640)

What else is at issue? In the minds of many Canadians there is a genuine feeling of cynicism, a feeling of mistrust about the motive of the government and exactly where it intends to lead us.

Mr. Paproski: We are all worried.

Mr. Mazankowski: Law-abiding citizens are concerned that their rights and freedoms are being whittled away under the simplistic guise of peace and security measures. Why this overkill? Are there sinister motives? Many people are apprehensive. Many are asking this very question. The bill is introduced by a government which has adopted the stance of coddling the criminal. Now we are presented with a package of legislation which would suddenly transpose this attitude into a policy of dealing more harshly with criminals. The government is listening to public opinion in the area of gun control, but not in the area of capital punishment. It disregards the polls which have been taken throughout the country in that connection. There is a glaring inconsistency in the government's approach.

The public is not buying this legislation, and rightly so. The bill addresses itself, not to the criminal but to the law-abiding citizen. In my view, the government is, and will continue to be, an administration which extends its compassion, not to the victim but to the criminal. It is the victims of crime who are being punished by this govern-

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ment, not the criminals. It is the innocent, the law-abiding citizens who will be the victims of this bill.

What is the issue before Canadians today? It is the issue of law and order, and to the extent that this package of legislation addresses itself to peace and order I suggest it is a misnomer. We require positive steps to establish an environment which will create greater respect for the law. Looking at the bill before us, we have to ask ourselves: Will it result in a greater respect for the law? The answer to that question is "No". Indeed, I suggest it will do exactly the opposite.

The latest edition of the report of the Law Reform Commission has been quoted from on many occasions during this debate. Reading through it, one finds such phrases as "The more laws, the more offenders", and "Assembly lines of dime-store justice". On another page the report says "our picture of the criminal justice system bears little resemblance to reality". In my view, those phrases are an adequate description of the legislation before us.

Furthermore, I believe the application of this gun control legislation would be weighted unfairly against the rural population, against the youth of our country and against our native population. In this connection I should like to place on record a letter which was forwarded to the editor of the *St. Paul Journal* and appeared in the edition of March 24. I should like to quote a section of the letter which outlines the apprehensions felt by the Metis Association of Alberta. The letter is signed by the association's president, Mr. Ambrose J. Laboucane. It reads in part:

This type of legislation violates our rights as native people and disregards the democratic process that we, the people of this country, are so proud of and fought so dearly for in two world wars.

I personally feel our government is violating the God-given laws that have been effective for centuries.

I say, further, that the bill will not be enforced fairly in the case of the poor and the underprivileged. Again, we need only look at the document which was tabled here last week, "Our Criminal Law," to find confirmation of this impression.

In practice, the penalty (for crimes) often depends not on the nature of the crime but on the person who commits it. Our prison population contains a quite unrepresentative proportion of poor, of disadvantaged and of native offenders. The richer you are, the better your chance of getting away with something. Is it that rich men make the laws and so what rich men do is not a crime but simply shrewd business practice? Or is it that position and wealth protect the rich against intervention?

I see the section on gun laws being enforced along lines which bear the least resistance. The easy targets will be those who are underprivileged and unfamiliar with the law. I see the prospect of harassment levelled against innocent people who are caught in the web of this law on legal technicalities because of the difficulty they find in adjusting and altering their sports and cultural habits in line with the imposition of this law, one which is based upon sheer lunacy. This is a form of "innocent guilt" which is unjust, unnecessary and inexpedient.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: There are areas where steps could legitimately be taken with respect to the use of firearms; for example, the development and administration of an