

fundamentally changed the immigration laws of the country. At that time, abuse was heaped upon a joint committee which did some travelling as a result of that green paper. However, as the minister will recall, the concepts set forth in that green paper were dealt with by the committee and the public.

● (1530)

As a result, there was guidance to the department, to the minister of employment and immigration and to the government with respect to what society really thought about immigration and what the true problems really were. The legislation that came out of that was responsive, at least in terms of this House of Commons. It was so responsive that, as I recollect it, there were only four days spent on second reading of a very complicated bill. It got over the problem of the omnibus nature of the bill. It is something which should commend itself to the minister in terms of dealing with a number of principles arranged side by side in a piece of legislation that can cause great difficulty in focusing upon those principles for the purposes of a debate.

As you perhaps know, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of non-controversial items in the bill. I am concerned that nowhere in Sections 166, 177 and 168(1) is there any definition of what constitutes sexual misconduct. A definition of that is nowhere to be found in this bill. I think this can cause some difficulty in terms of the application of the law. I hope that in the course of studying this bill, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs will try to find some definition. If that does not happen, then the courts will have to take a close look and come up with something that constitutes what is sexual misconduct in any given set of circumstances.

It is important when we are making some new law in the matter that the criminal law define rather specifically for the benefit of the accused as well as the benefit of society what the rights and responsibilities and the limits of conduct are in accordance with that law.

One other question I think the committee will have to consider concerns the sentences that are set forth in the bill. Some of them are rather light. One matter brought to my attention by men and women in my constituency as well as those people I meet as I travel across the country, and also mentioned in letters, concerns a developing sense of disrespect for the law. Policemen tell me that sentences in some cases are really licences to carry on an illegal activity, that the element of deterrence is gradually being eroded from the criminal law and that the criminal law itself is not providing a sense of determination by government, as they see it, by the system of the administration of justice. I hear these things from policemen, and I am sure the minister has received letters from policemen regarding that matter. But more and more ordinary members of society, who are either the beneficiaries of the law or perhaps from time to time subject to it, but at least those who would like to be beneficiaries, are saying that something is happening with respect to sentencing, with respect to parole and with respect to bail. People say now that attitudes are hardening, that sentences are too light and that people are

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getting off too easily. There are some areas within this bill where sentences are set out. I think the committee has to look at those areas with respect to the general concern that is evident in society.

The law that exists, particularly the criminal law, gives a message to the community. It sets a certain standard for the community and demands something of the community. That message has to be that we are within reason, when they are reasonable, behind the law enforcement agencies of the country; that a criminal act, an act outside the law, is viewed seriously and that the administration of justice in all of its fields views breaches of the law seriously. That is not to say we do not temper justice with mercy, but the public is demanding, and I think they have a right to demand, that sentences be firm and that there are messages for those who contemplate breaking the law. However, some people will not listen to those messages. We make mistakes sometimes in thinking that criminals think normally. They do not. Having dealt with them at both ends of the counsel table, I have found they do not. It is important that a message goes out. From that point of view we will have to look at some of the sentences in this bill.

There has been a great deal of public comment. No doubt the committee will have the benefit of advice from the Department of Justice as well as input from a great number of people who are concerned with all of the elements in the bill. It is not the kind of bill that should be delayed. It is one that should be dealt with appropriately because of the nature of the bill and the fact that it deals with a number of matters.

I want to say that I am very pleased that the Minister of Justice has returned from launching his leadership campaign in the United Kingdom and is here to listen to my speech. I want to express to him every good wish for Christmas.

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) in paying tribute to the hon. member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) who has been working on this bill. I was not aware that he was a Queen's Counsel, but I am aware that he has a keen interest in the people of this country and in the unity of Canada. That, in my view, is even better than being a Queen's Counsel.

I want to deal with some items in the bill. I cannot say that I am enthusiastic about everything in this bill, nor are my constituents. It is my responsibility to bring to the attention of the Minister of Justice who is sponsoring this bill some of the concerns of the people and some of the changes we would like to see in this bill.

The title of the bill is very positive. It reads:

An Act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to sexual offences and the protection of young persons and to amend certain other acts in relation thereto or in consequence thereof.

When I first read that title and noticed the words "the protection of young persons", I felt quite happy. That was a positive statement. Certainly our young people need protection. But when I read the bill, I am not so sure that we are protecting our young people. I am concerned about what