



House of Commons  
CANADA

## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

---

FEWO



NUMBER 025



1st SESSION



39th PARLIAMENT

---

**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, November 23, 2006**

—  
**Chair**

**The Honourable Judy Sgro**

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Thursday, November 23, 2006

• (1120)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.)):** We'll call to order our meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

We are very pleased to have Mr. Victor Malarek finally get here and to have an opportunity to listen to him and have questions and answers.

We are going to reserve an hour for you, starting now, rather than 45 minutes, because we're anxious to hear your presentation and then have questions and answers.

Mr. Malarek, please go ahead.

**Mr. Victor Malarek (As an Individual):** Thank you.

I want to thank you for inviting me. I think this is a very important issue. I know it's a very important issue, and I'm going to zero in on what I think is something that has to be dealt with.

Over the past decade, alarm bells have been set off around the globe about a human rights disaster of epic proportions—that is, the wholesale trafficking of women and children into the worldwide sex trade. However, for the majority of nations on the planet, from the top echelons of political power all the way down to the cop on the beat, this issue has yet to register as a priority. With a wink and a nudge, these women, who walk the streets and who work in the brothels, are dismissed with the age-old hackneyed cliché that prostitution is the world's oldest profession.

What I want to do is get one thing perfectly straight about prostitution. It is not the world's oldest profession. It is the world's oldest oppression of women. There are myriad reasons for the explosion of this modern-day slave trade: extreme poverty; the Internet; the insatiable demand, with the three key letters in “demand” being M-A-N; and moves by governments worldwide to legalize prostitution.

What I want to deal with here today is legalization.

While the mass rape continues day after day around the globe, so many political leaders have been duped into thinking that the one way to stop trafficking or curb trafficking of women and girls is to legalize prostitution. As a result, some nations have jumped on the legalization bandwagon without thinking this issue through. The arguments put forward by the legalization lobby are, to put it lightly, a load of hogwash. All legalization succeeds in doing is making life easier for pimps and prostitute users, and much, much harder for women and girls to escape the prison of prostitution. The fact is, very

few women ever make a conscious decision to walk the streets, night after night, to service platoons of strange, doughy, greasy, hairy, middle-aged losers on Viagra every single night, only to turn over most, if not all, that money to some disgusting pimp.

You're going to hear me saying “majority” and “vast majority” a lot. What drives the vast majority of women into prostitution is abject poverty. That is an indisputable fact. And pimps, traffickers, and brothel owners cash in on the tragic circumstances of desperate women and girls by ensnaring them into prostitution.

There are those who point out in smug tones that many trafficked women and girls go into this trade with eyes wide open. Well, when you're starving, when your children have nothing to eat, when your baby or your elderly parents are in need of urgent health care, is offering these women jobs as prostitutes the best we can do? Is this the level to which modern society has fallen, that if you need \$50 or \$100, put out or starve?

That said, let me return to the panacea touted by the prostitution forces in their disingenuous drive to end trafficking. What galls me about the pro-legalization lobby is the wording of their position, oozing with sanctimonious concern for prostitutes, declaring that the sex trade is a profession central to the subsistence of many women who deserve the same workplace safety and social respect as any other member of society.

It's one thing to believe that legalizing prostitution will somehow better protect these women from harm, but it is quite another thing altogether to suggest that prostitution is a worthwhile career, deserving of social respect. Think of it: recruiters heading into high schools and universities on career day to promote to our daughters the benefits of becoming a prostitute.

I accept that the sex trade exists and is not going to go away, but I would think that most of us would think, and agree, that minimizing the number of women who get sucked into this pathetic existence should be of the highest priority of every government and every elected official with a moral and ethical compass. I, for one, do not believe for any moment that any rational young woman or girl dreams of or for that matter should be encouraged to dream of prostitution as a vocation.

So just who are the advocates of legalization? This is the question that everyone should be asking. For the most part, they're a ragtag bunch of former prostitutes singing the praises of life on the streets as a happy hooker. And behind these women, always, slinking in the shadows, pulling their strings, are pimps, brothel owners, and low-life criminals. They are the ones who make the money, and I'm talking about truckloads of money, on the backs of these women. Once the floodgates are opened with legalization, they know they can make even more money with no worry of criminal consequences, because legalization turns these one-time sleaze buckets into respectable business entrepreneurs.

• (1125)

What gives these so-called advocates the authority to speak on behalf prostitutes anywhere? More importantly, has anyone ever bothered to ask the question or to ask about the deafening silence emanating from the brothels and side streets where the vast majority of prostitutes work? And that silence is because these women are afraid to speak out, because they exist in a state of terror, intimidation, and shame.

I know for a fact that the majority of these advocates have never met, let alone talked to, a foreign woman trafficked into prostitution. That I know, because the so-called advocates do not speak Thai; they do not speak Russian; they do not speak Spanish. And these foreign women would never trust these so-called advocates.

Today, foreign women from destitute lands make up the vast majority of women in the sex trade in all western nations on the planet. More importantly, every single study I have ever read on interviews with prostitutes worldwide makes one message crystal clear. The vast majority caught up in the sex trade maze desperately want out. They don't want to do this work. They want to escape but they can't. They are trapped.

All the studies I've ever read on prostitution and all the interviews that I've had with women involved in this trade come to the same stark conclusion. The vast majority hate their work. They loathe the men they service even more, and they do not wish their tragic lot on any other woman. Yet here we have these gaggles of so-called happy hookers appearing hither, thither, and yon, purporting to speak on behalf of prostituted women everywhere. For some reason, politicians and committees roll out the welcome mat and listen intently to their position, without so much as giving them a light grilling.

Let me share with you the horrors of legalization that have been wrought on countries like Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands. Studies show that in each country where legalization has been enacted, it has led to a dramatic increase in all facets of the sex industry. It has led to a dramatic increase in the involvement of organized crime. This was one area they had hoped would be

stopped, and they are now spectacularly unsuccessful in stopping it. Where legalization has been introduced, the illegal sector has dwarfed the legal sector.

Far from containing it, in each of those countries legalization has led to an explosion in the number of destitute foreign women and girls trafficked into the sex trade in these countries because—and this is the key—they cannot find local women to supply the ever-increasing demand for more and more female bodies.

In Germany and the Netherlands, Dutch and German women are not the ones lining up to enter the trade. They have real jobs that don't require them to shed their clothes and have their bodies invaded by a dozen men a day. In fact, the report by the International Organization of Migration states that in the Netherlands, nearly 80% of the more than 85,000 sex workers in that country are foreigners from destitute lands. In Germany, which boasts 400,000 sex workers, foreigners make up 87%. These numbers alone speak volumes.

The one hot button pushed by the legalization forces is their concern for the safety of women. This is an absolute crock. Legalization has done nothing to stop the violence committed against these women. Prostitution is one of the more dangerous so-called jobs on the planet. I can think of no other in which so many women every year are routinely beaten, maimed, and killed as in prostitution. There's not a shred of evidence to show that legalization has even put the smallest dent in stopping the violence. No matter which way you look at legalizing prostitution, there's no way it will ever be a safe job. By its very nature, prostitution is sexual harassment at its worst. For anyone to suggest that legalization will somehow better protect women is telling nothing short of a cruel lie.

Another concern voiced by the legalization lobby is the protection of health. Again, another crock. In the legalized systems in Germany and the Netherlands, routine health checks are carried out, but only on the women, not the buyers of sex. In other words, the health check is really about protecting men from getting sexually transmitted diseases. Yet when you examine this so-called public health approach, it makes absolutely no sense.

Monitoring women for sexually transmitted diseases does not protect them from their clients, who can and do transmit disease to the women they purchase. Why are prostitute users not required to carry a medical card to show they are disease-free? Why should the woman be the one forced to play Russian roulette every time a man struts in for servicing?

•(1130)

Again, while it is true that some women do opt for this so-called profession, most don't—studies show this—and no girl does. If they had real control of their lives, virtually every one would opt for a real job that doesn't involve taking off their clothes and servicing platoons of strangers. Legalizing prostitution fuels the growth of the modern-day slavery that is now called trafficking by providing a facade behind which traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners can operate.

If government leaders truly care about the state of these women, they should be offering well-funded programs to assist women who want to leave prostitution instead of trying to make it easier for aroused men to find their quarry. This entire issue boils down to one word: dignity, the dignity of women in our society. In prostitution there is no dignity because the essence of what men buy is the right to degrade, to penetrate, and violate at will women's bodies. Legalizing and instituting this right does not sanitize prostitution or the violence and degradation against women.

Bottom line: legalization of prostitution is nothing more than a gift to traffickers, pimps, brothel owners, and prostitute users. All legalization does and succeeds in doing is increase demand. And it has increased demand in Germany, the Netherlands, and Australia for prostitution like no one's business by sending a powerful message to men that it is all right to buy a woman's body for sex. For the vast majority of women and girls caught up in the sex trade, prostitution is a means of survival, a last choice other than suicide. Every nation that has legalized prostitution is complicit in the suffering and continuing subjugation of these victims.

No one here, I'm sure, no one everywhere—certainly not the johns and the pimps and the brothel owners I have spoken to in my research on *The Natashas*—wants their daughter to become a prostitute. We should never, ever be thinking of legalizing sexual abuse of other people's daughters.

I think I've done about my ten minutes. I can go on.

**The Chair:** Okay. If you want a couple of more minutes, I think the committee would not have a problem with that.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Much of what I talk about on the legalization question is when I started to look at trafficking around the world of these young women and girls. I kept trying to figure out what was wrong. It is that we are going after these nations that are totally impoverished. These girls have nothing, these young women have nothing for them, and they are prime targets for traffickers.

The answer that I'm hearing now coming out, and it's one that has me very worried, is that we can better stop this and we can better control this by legalizing the system. Legalizing the system does nothing but entrap these women even further, because you cannot tell what is legal and what is illegal. The police in Germany and the police in Netherlands and the police in Australia have given up. They don't know whether the woman on the street is legal or illegal.

We have, and we exist in, a patriarchal society. It's been going wink, wink, nudge, nudge, let's have a ball with these young women. No one is challenging what is causing this demand and why has the demand exploded. One of the reasons the demand has exploded is the Internet. I look at the Internet as the steamiest whorehouse on the

planet, because everything on it is incredible with respect to the numbers of sites that open up, and you can find a woman in any village, town, or city on the planet. It's very scary.

This answer that people keep coming up with by saying legalization will control is a cruel lie. It's not true. It is very dangerous. Men have to take responsibility for what is happening. Men are the cause of the demand, and men have to be confronted with this issue. Women have to lead the charge, but men also have to be behind them saying this is wrong, it is really wrong. I don't understand how it has exploded to the extent it has.

I have travelled around the world in war zones over my 36 years in journalism. I've written about the abuse of children, of women, and of the elderly. I've never seen anything like this, the explosion of this. It seems that these men think it's their right, and no one is fighting for these women. We have to be careful in Canada, because it will explode on our doorstep if we continue to turn a tolerant eye to this thing.

One of the other things is we tend to look at prostitutes with a jaded eye. They wear gaudy clothes, they wear slimy makeup, stiletto heels, see-through stuff, and we brush them off and dismiss them with words like prostitute, whore, slut, harlot, and the men are benign—johns, clients, and customers. We have to stop this kind of thinking and turn it on its heel, because it can happen to our daughters, it can happen to our granddaughters and nieces. It can happen here. It is starting to happen here, and that's what we have to be careful about.

•(1135)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your very effective and very important presentation.

We will go on to our questions and answers. We will start with Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Malarek. You certainly don't mince words. I've heard you before a couple of times, and I appreciate very much your being here today.

You raise many issues. I know you focused on the whole matter of legalization, but in your presentation you raised a number of other issues. I'm struck by your comment on the explosion and by your comment that abject poverty is what leads women into it.

Let me ask you a few questions, and then I'll give you a chance to answer.

Can you speak to the relationship between abject poverty and the explosion? You referenced the Internet in your first two or three sentences, and that's something I'm interested in. We haven't had a lot of discussion on the role that the Internet plays in the whole area of human trafficking. I'd be interested to hear your comments on that. As I said to you before we sat down, I'm interested always in Canada as a source country for human trafficking. Could you speak to that and again perhaps tie that to the issues of poverty and trafficking?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Poverty and the explosion, yes.

When I started to look into this issue to write *The Natashas*, what I looked at was the fall of the Iron Curtain and the fall of the Berlin Wall in East Germany. The social safety net in Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, and all of those former Soviet countries is completely shattered; there's nothing left.

What has happened is that alcoholism and family breakdown have just devastated those countries. Russia, for example, has over one million children in institutional care—abandoned orphans. Ukraine has 100,000. This is because women have been told they have to saddle the responsibility of the family with an alcoholic husband or an abandoning husband. Women make up the vast majority of the unemployed in Russia and Ukraine and all of those former Soviet countries.

What happens is that criminals within those countries target every resource they can possibly use and exploit. They've now targeted young women and girls.

One of the things that got me interested in this book was that I found out that a lot of young girls who have ended up in the orphanages in Ukraine and Russia and other countries have been targeted because no one speaks for them. They come out of these institutions without even knowing how to boil water, let alone anything else. Once you've been in an institution and you leave—and I know this because I grew up in an institution in Quebec—nothing else matters. You have no one to turn to, you exist on your own, and you try to make it on your own.

These girls and young women have been targeted—deliberately targeted. Some may know what they're going into, but when you're really hungry.... I've gone to Russia, Ukraine, and other countries, and the kind of poverty they face day in and day out, we don't understand; we can't even comprehend. Our welfare people are living on easy street compared with what they have. They are repeatedly targeted and are sent out to foreign lands. It's very easy to smuggle into Germany, Spain, Turkey, the Middle East, and everywhere else.

My chapter on the Internet is called "Click of a Mouse", because with a click of a mouse you can get anything you want. The sex trade on the Internet is incredible. Two seasons ago on *W-FIVE* I did a documentary for CTV, going to Costa Rica. I didn't have to do much research. I just turned to my producer and said, do you want to see how quick it is? I went to the computer, and we got villages and towns throughout Costa Rica, with pictures and videotapes of young

teenage girls and young women. We could just go in with a click of a mouse—any country, any city, any village in those countries.

With a click of a mouse I can see pictures, videotapes, prices. Whatever I want, the Internet is providing it. You can not believe how much is on the Internet. No matter what you put on the Internet.... If I have a sore back and enter "massage", 90% of what's going to come up is sex sites. These women are targeted through the Internet.

In some of the brothels I went into to see what the heck was going on in various countries, the guys had their computers right up there, with the pictures of the girls, and there were guys writing in from Canada, the United States, Japan, Israel, France, Germany, Spain, wherever. They would just type in, see what they want, and they would go on their "business trips", and go out there.

Remember, the demand is not about sleazy guys who are low-life trailer trash or that sort of thing; these guys who are going out are husbands and professional men who get onto airplanes to do business on behalf of corporations, and then go and abuse women and do things to them that they can not do here without getting into serious trouble.

Canada as a source? Years ago I wrote a book called *Haven's Gate: Canada's immigration Fiasco*, in which I said we have to worry about what is happening in Europe, with the floods of refugee claimants and all of the other things that are happening with economic migrants, or we will suffer the same consequence. Well, we didn't pay attention and we suffered the same consequence.

What is happening in Europe will happen here. What is happening in the United States now will happen here, because they are going to come here if we turn a tolerant or blind eye to this. We are right now not at it, but years ago, when I used to read *NOW* magazine and *Eye Weekly* magazine in Toronto, the prostitution page was half a page, maybe three-quarters of a page. Now, it's four, five, or six pages. But look at it; it's foreign women—Thai, Filipino, Ukrainian, Russian, South American from any South American country you want. So it's now starting to come here.

• (1140)

A lot of people never question, who are these girls? Why do we have all of these foreign women here from destitute countries and men having a field day? No one is asking, how did these girls get here, and do they really want to do what they're doing?

There's a study by the San Francisco Women's Center that questioned 854 so-called prostitutes around the world, including Canada, the United States, Germany, Japan, and others, and 89% desperately said they wanted out, that they were trapped and there was no way out. What can you do? We don't offer them anything. Yet these legalization forces don't talk about the 89% who desperately want out. They don't see themselves as happy hookers. So we allow this to continue.

Canada can easily become a real problem if we don't keep our eyes open, and if we start to entertain the idea of legalization, you will see foreign women quickly fill the void that local women who have real jobs won't do. The classic example of that is the strippers who we brought in from Romania to do things that Canadian strippers told me they would never do under any circumstances because they wouldn't debase themselves that much, but impoverished women who have nothing can easily do it.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Your time is up.

Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** I would like to thank Mr. Malarek for his testimony.

I have read that in countries where prostitution has been legalized, women who had never been involved in prostitution and who lost their jobs—regular jobs not in the sex trade—were having problems getting unemployment insurance because they were told that they should become prostitutes. Is that true?

Is it true that only 4% of prostitutes have registered in countries where prostitution has been legalized? As you mentioned in your testimony, there is a huge black market, and it's not true that if prostitution were legalized, organized crime would be pushed out and these women could do their "work" more safely.

Also, what can be done at the level of Canada's laws so that Canada, and therefore Quebec, do not become attractive place for opening up the sex trade?

What can we do to fight against sex tourism and ensure that these private companies and these Canadian, American or other multi-nationals can't go with impunity into countries where there is unbelievable poverty and indulge in things they could not do in their own country?

What can we do, nationally and internationally, to fight this phenomenon?

• (1145)

[*English*]

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** You asked a lot of questions.

One of the things about the Netherlands is, for example, they said, well, we're going to better protect these women and we're going to have unions, and we will also put a program into place where women can go if they want to escape prostitution. Women did not line up to go into unions to be better protected. In fact, very few women are in any union, for a variety of reasons, but the largest reason being shame. They don't want anyone to know and they don't want to be registered on a government document as being a prostitute because

of the shame behind it. They also are told by their pimps and controllers that they don't want them in any union because they don't want them to have any rights.

The safety issue became a bit of a joke in the Netherlands, for example, when health officials went to some of the brothels and said, gee whiz, you don't have pillows for these women on the beds. The brothel owners looked at the health officials and said, "Are you crazy? The johns might come in and smother them with them." That was their concern. It wasn't about the comfort of the women, but the very fact that crazy johns could come in and smother them. The working conditions in these places have not changed whatsoever.

On legalization in Canada, if we were to go that route, we would end up with what is in place in Germany and what is in place in the Netherlands, where the communities are now saying, what did we do, why did we ever do this. This is nothing more than adding to the abuse and subjugation of women. That's all it has shown in Germany and all it has shown in the Netherlands. Women who want out cannot escape. The crime element still stays in play because the amount of money to be made on the backs of these women is incredible. The U. S. State Department, the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration in Europe have shown that it is a multi-billion-dollar industry. I think it's around \$12 billion to \$16 billion as a trade for the criminal element. They're not going to say that they're going to give this up, whether or not it's made legal or illegal. It's third only to weapons and drugs, and probably will one day surpass one of those as second.

On sex tourism in Canadian corporations, one of the things I learned when I was looking at my book coming out in Finland was that there were two corporations in Finland that, as a reward to their top salesmen, gave them sex tours into a very small town in Russia that was a major player in girls being trafficked. This was the reward for their best salesmen. Corporations need to know and need to understand that their representatives represent that corporation, and if they are caught doing these kinds of things, they should be fired. There should be a code of ethics, a code of morality, a code of how you guide yourself outside the country. Many corporations are basically not paying attention to that.

When I was in Costa Rica, I was on the street there, just a basic guy with a hidden camera—the guy didn't know I had a hidden camera—and he asked me what I wanted. Did I want Viagra; did I want some dope; and did I want young women? I said, well, you know, yes. He said, well, the young women are in that club right there, and they were all 18, 19, and 20. I just looked at him and said, well, you know, I want younger, and he looked at me and he looked around—and of course he didn't see the cameras—and he said, what do you mean? I said, I'm into 13, 14, and he went, oh, I'll do it, I can make that happen. Now, I'm a Canadian guy or an American guy, and he just said, I'll make it happen, and he was setting it up. We didn't go, but later we went to a rescue mission in which I talked to 9-, 10-, and 11-year-old girls who were brutally sexually abused and raped by Canadian and American men repeatedly. They're just basically sold out there and there was nothing to protect them.

Sex tourism has really exploded, again because of the Internet, and because there's very little in the way of protections.

• (1150)

We have a law in Canada that says if you go overseas and abuse a child, you can face consequences here. Unfortunately, we don't have any RCMP in those countries to investigate.

They had a very, very terrible case of these people who were going over for sex tours in Finland, and they let all the guys off because the girls couldn't come over from the little town of Dubi to go and testify, so there was no one to testify against them.

Canadian men and American men make up huge numbers of sex tourists going over to places like Thailand, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Ukraine, Germany, or to wherever there are huge sex venues. Somehow we have to pass a message on to corporations to say this is not acceptable behaviour; if you're there on business, this is not acceptable behaviour and you can lose your job.

This will take a real turn of thinking in the minds of men, because this is driven by men. Men have a choice. Men have a choice to say they're not going to do this. Impoverished women and women who are forced into this—by the way, lots are forced into this by intimidation and fear—don't have a choice. They don't have a choice.

**The Chair:** We have to move on to our next speaker.

Mr. Stanton.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Malarek, for attending today—truly disturbing testimony, I must say.

I have a couple of questions, but I want to go first to the issue that you just finished up on, and that is the demand side.

I can't help but think there has to be.... Well, let me just put it to you. What can we do in terms of moving the attitudes of men around this issue? I think you spoke to it quite well, very eloquently. What is it going to take to move those attitudes? There are probably a number of different things that could be done. What do you envision we in government could do to help reinforce the fact that this is unacceptable behaviour, that society should not tolerate it? What do

you see as the best way to remedy and to start to move and reduce the demand side? Ultimately, that's at the root.

We're doing a study here on human trafficking. We've learned from you and other witnesses that human trafficking is propelled by the prostitution industry, the sex trade, the sex slavery that goes on. So it all ties back to ultimately getting at the root of this issue, the root of this phenomenon, which is the demand, and it's men. What do you envision would be a good solution?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** We're now looking at something that is so pervasive. When I talk about explosion, I mean explosion on the world. How do you stop it is one of the biggest questions you'll ever have to deal with.

Men have to change their attitude about women. Women aren't there to be bought for their pleasure. This thinking is anathema to me and is anathema to the men I know. I don't understand why it has exploded to the extent that they think that because they have \$50 in their pockets they can do whatever they want without consequence, and there are consequences.

One thing that men understand is name and shame. Again, the vast majority of these men are not low-life people who have no money. They're middle-class husbands and fathers and sons and businessmen. Name and shame them. Go after them. Don't go after the so-called prostitute, because she's a victim in this whole thing. These guys are not victims; they're the perpetrators. They always have the nice names—John, client, customer. It's benign. Everything about them is benign.

We have a serious problem in the way men are now being conditioned to think. It's always been like that throughout history. Now, because of the Internet and television and many of the shows, and even these crazy rap videos where women and young girls are subjugated into all kinds of sexual positions, guys are beginning to think that this is all right.

I've spoken to guys who were in brothels who've told me, look, it's easier to go here than develop a relationship. Whatever happened to romance and developing relationships, when you can go in and buy something for \$50 or \$100, and then it's over and that's it?

• (1155)

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I don't want to interrupt you, but on that thought, do you have any thoughts on why we don't do a better job at naming and shaming these perpetrators?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Yes, because we live in a patriarchal society controlled by men.

Look, we name and shame prostitutes. Why? We put them in front of cameras. We take pictures of them. We say, look at that disgusting woman, leading our upstanding men astray. Oh, come on, folks, we live in the 21st century.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Does this take us back, then, to laws—to criminalization, or better criminalization? I'm not trying to put words in your mouth here; please tell me if I'm off track. But do we in fact need to come back to the criminalization of this behaviour in order to drive the point home?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Women are the victims; they need to be decriminalized. Men are the perpetrators; they need to be criminalized. When you talk about decriminalizing, always have the other end of the sword out there, because decriminalizing without criminalizing the men is legalization; it's just another way.

You have to have men responsible for their actions and the consequences of those actions. They have to be responsible, and we just cannot allow a society that has exploded into thinking they can do anything they want to girls.

What has happened in Europe and in Russia and in Ukraine, and all of these countries where hundreds of thousands and millions of young women are involved in this because they have no other way, and men have gone crazy on this—There has to be a consequence for their behaviour.

Women are the victims. They have always been the victims. That's why I always say that prostitution is the world's oldest oppression of women. It is not a profession; it is an oppression.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Let's turn to the Internet for a second; it ties in here. No doubt your comments today about the Internet parallel those of others with respect to how this has really opened up the world to this type of activity.

Is there a way, or should we be exploring a way, to curb this? I know that in the Internet world, any time you make any initiatives to curtail the freedoms that are allowed in the digital world you get a massive backlash from those protecting the freedoms citizens have. However, this type of activity is a blight on society.

Is there a way, or could you see any ways, to get a movement to curtail the ability of Internet service providers to allow these sites to even be available? You've done some work on this.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Yes, I know. It really is almost now impossible to control. It is possible when it comes to child porn, because that's illegal everywhere. But when it comes to adults and adult behaviour, people are screaming freedom, and this is their information. It's impossible to control, so again, it's about the choice of men not going on those sites.

The one thing I always advocate, though, is that all the hackers out there who are going into legitimate sites and throwing in worms and Trojans—I have an idea for you. The idea is to go into those sites and do something socially worthwhile.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Good for you.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** A good idea.

Ms. Bell.

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Thank you.

I'd like to thank Mr. Malarek for his presentation. I like the use of your very strong words “oppression” and “modern-day slavery”, and about how women get into that from abject poverty. Those are very strong words, and I congratulate you for using them and continuing to use them. It's something we aren't strong enough on, I think, in this country.

I actually wanted to physically applaud when you were speaking, because you touched a nerve with me on this. I've seen your documentary, *The Natashas*. It was very moving, very well done.

I want to talk about Canada, where prostitution is not legal but is happening everywhere, in every city. If you just walk down the street at night, you can meet the victims. You see ads in newspapers, as you've mentioned. You can look on the Internet.

I've unhappily found instances myself. I was searching for something and typed in “women”. Boy! I got all kinds of interesting sites that I wasn't interested in. They're there, and as you say, they're very easy to find. I've seen in my local papers advertising for “nice, clean girls”, “exotic women”—all these advertisements. As you say, if you click on “massage”, you get ads for prostitutes. Even though this is illegal in Canada, it's happening. How do we stop this? How do we expose it, I guess, for what it is?

There are also the effects on first nations in this country, because of some of the situations, the abject poverty on some of the reserves in this country. I come from British Columbia. You probably know about the downtown eastside of Vancouver, where a lot of women, because of prostitution, drugs, and the poverty that brings them to the cities, get caught up in this and are victimized, and quite often killed.

There is all that. I think we have to recognize that it's happening within our country, and not just outside. So there's that piece of it.

But I also want to talk about our trade policy, which in some ways created in us a want or a desire for more and cheaper products, which created sweatshops in other countries and poverty, because when you aren't paying people enough to eat and live and raise a family because we want cheaper prices.... We know about the sweatshop situation, and how our greed, our consumption, has maybe kept this going around the world—not just in Canada, but in the western world in general.

•(1200)

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Western nations have to take a lead role in this, and Canada is placed to take the lead role on it. The United States has the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the U.S. State Department, which has done a pretty good job in highlighting the cesspools of debauchery around the world. However, it plays a diplomatic dance over this issue. It does not identify the countries that are the true problems around the globe because it has to deal with so many of its NATO partners and all the diplomacy that comes into play. Canada has always had a stellar role on human rights around the world, and that's what we should look at. We stand up for the dignity of women. We stand up for the dignity of children. We stand up for the dignity of senior citizens. We stand up for these issues. It's important that we continue to stand.

When you look at the issue within Canada, the reality, and recognize the reality that we do have a serious problem on the streets in parts of Vancouver, the north end of Winnipeg, Toronto, Edmonton, and wherever, and a lot are trafficked out of native reserves, this is internal trafficking, which is a significant problem around the world. There is internal trafficking in Russia and Thailand and places like that. We have to deal with that issue as well. Again, we allow these women to be victimized, because we don't go after the perpetrator. The perpetrator is the guy with the cash in his pocket. These women are forced out into these situations, and again we go back to this whole thing about a patriarchal society. Women have to stand up and men have to stand up with women and say we will not allow this to happen. Again, when they're that poor or forced into situations, women do not have a choice. The guy with the buck in his pocket has the choice. We have to stop that.

Western nations also have to offer programs and incentives to countries like Thailand and Russia and Ukraine and the Philippines and South American countries, where these women are being trafficked from, to give them a chance at life. It is easy to get a visa or to get into the Netherlands or Germany within 48 hours to be a prostitute, but you'll never get a visa to work in McDonald's. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't balance in my reality. Yet with these countries, go to places like Ukraine or Russia and say we have jobs for your girls because the local women have jobs. If they have jobs and this is what you want to offer them, that says a lot about society today.

We have to be careful in Canada that we don't play into that. Women are and will always be victims in this trade. The vast majority of them loathe this thing. Of the ones I have spoken to, there are a handful of happy hookers out there. Great on them, if that's what they want to do. But when you start to talk to these girls, they tell you that they want out and they can't get out. The Netherlands has a program to allow girls to escape, and yet they don't apply it. They don't apply it. Sweden has a program, and huge numbers have applied and have got out.

•(1205)

**Ms. Catherine Bell:** Do I have any time left?

**The Chair:** No.

Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, thank you. I very much appreciate your frankness and directness on this issue.

There are a couple of areas I want to look at.

There is another committee of the House actually looking at prostitution, the committee on justice. I was discussing this with one of the members of that committee. They are looking at legalization, I would say, and that's not a good idea, in that Sweden has done the opposite. They have criminalized the user and decriminalized.... And she was saying the Swedish system is not working. Can you enlighten us a bit about some of the pros and cons of this research as to whether it's working or not and why? It may not be perfect, but there might be some things. You know a lot more about it than I do, since you mentioned it just a few minutes ago, and you also mentioned helping women to get out and how that works. What do they have in place to get women out who want to get out of it?

I have a couple more questions on other areas. Could you just touch on that very quickly?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** When the Swedish model came into play, one of the things that happened was for the first couple of years nothing happened. Trafficked women were still being trafficked and the prostitution trade went wild. The women who were on the committees and whatever couldn't understand why. What happened was the message has to get through to the top echelons of the prosecutors and judges, all the way down to the cop on the beat, and on the beat they are largely men. They had to understand what was going on and understand just what prostitution was—that it is not a victimless crime and that something had to be done.

The Swedish government ended up putting a program into place to educate the police on the beat, prosecutors, and judges. Once that was done they started to go out and do their job, which was to stop the johns—the prostitute users—and not go after the prostitutes. What's happened now in Sweden is the number of women trafficked into Sweden is very small, almost negligible. It used to be big. The traffickers figure there is too much trouble and too many problems to bother ever going into Sweden, so they've taken off to other countries, like Finland.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** That's good to know.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** It is working, because they offered programs to these young women who want out. About 60% of women in prostitution wanted out, went to those programs, and got out.

The johns are subject to fines, and if they keep going to these places, they're subject to six months in jail, plus being identified. It's not a great thing to be identified. So it is working.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** That's good. I'm glad to hear it, because it's been my position to charge the johns for a long time. I know that they've tried it in some countries, not as part of the law, but as a voluntary thing.

I was in Italy a few years back—because I go back and forth quite a bit—and they had a system. But as my colleague was saying, the men who make the rules were being identified, and they happened to be the guys with money, so they have the influence. They said, well, we can't. But they weren't being criminalized; they were simply being identified publicly. Of course they killed that program pretty fast, because the influence was, why are we being identified? We have the power, right?

It doesn't work if it's voluntary, and that's the other thing I wanted to say.

When I flip channels and watch a late program, I'm really bothered by the girls suggestively...the infomercials. I don't see that as having any place whatsoever on my screen; I don't care what time of day it is. It's not even a soft porn movie with some sort of connecting story. It's just call—I want your input on that.

That's two questions. Is that the thin edge of the wedge, or maybe we can't go after it?

The other question concerns that as some of our witnesses said, the problem of charging is the claim that it's consensual. How would you deal with the issue of consensual versus non-consensual in court, if a man is saying yes, this was—?

• (1210)

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** It's not consensual if you make it a criminal matter for men. If you criminalize men, it's not consensual.

In the legalized systems in Germany and the Netherlands, the pimps and organized crime are still there.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's just legal.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** To think otherwise is foolish. They are there; I've seen them operate, and it doesn't matter.

Also the criminal aspect of it dwarfs the legal aspect, because they know the amount of money, and they know they bring these women in by the busload, the truckload, by the dozens every night.

Remember, the sad reality for these young women is they're only good to these men for a few years. Then they're discarded back to impoverished countries that look at these women as nothing but prostitutes, whores, sluts, harlots, and whatever. They end up being stigmatized and re-stigmatized, and many end up committing suicide, because there's nothing for these women when they get back home.

One of the things I say—and I said this to the President of the Ukraine when I met him on this issue—is that countries allowing their young women to be trafficked wholesale should hold their heads in shame, for not fighting hard enough to do something for these women and protect the weakest in their society. The biggest shame goes to the western countries that bring these women in by

the planeload, truckload, and boatload to work out the sexual fantasies of their men and for sex tourism.

Germany and the Netherlands make huge amounts of money on sex tourism for their tax coffers. That's why I look at Germany as one of the biggest brothels on the planet now, with 400,000 women working the streets. You have to wonder about that.

I've sort of lost my track now.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** That's okay.

What's your take on infomercials?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** Yes, infomercials. You know what? I've seen them and I go click. I know what's behind those. It is a sexy little girl, but boy, you should see who you're getting on the phone. Wake up, guys; it's not this girl. I just turn them off; everybody has the ability.

It's the same thing with the Internet. You can go on the Internet, and it gets far worse there. You just don't do it. Again it goes back to the education of men. Where's the screw that needs tightening that pushes them to this level?

When I was growing up, guys would get their stuff in a brown paper envelope that came through Canada Post. If you waited on Canada Post back then, it probably came in about four to five or six weeks, then it would be out of date.

Men don't go to bars and brag—hey, where can I buy myself a chick?—because that's not cool. The Internet has given them the opportunity, where they chat on chat lines in absolute anonymity. They use those handle names, and they tell each other where to go and what to do.

On those various sites, which I have examined, there are people sending messages saying, hey, guys, this is the reality out there. But they're not concerned about the reality; they're only concerned about their two, three, or four minutes of bliss. They don't care about the misery they're causing, and this is the message that has to be drummed into the heads of these men repeatedly, but it isn't.

As for TV infomercials, and *Eye Weekly* and *Now* magazines—and any other voice that wants to be trumpeting this stuff—I always say to men, ignore it; don't get involved in it.

• (1215)

**The Chair:** Okay, I have to move on.

You will have to be our last questioner, Ms. Smith.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Okay, thank you. Are we running out of time, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** I think so.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** You've covered a lot of the things that were very salient. You talked about decriminalization; the Swedish model, which is working; studies about prostitutes; and so on. But the one real concern I have is that every time there's a great sports event in a country, truckloads and boatloads of young girls and boys are brought in to service the Olympics. It's behind the scenes.

The Vancouver Olympics are coming up now. I'm looking forward to the sports aspect, but also I'm not looking forward to the Olympics, because of the women and children who will be victimized there.

What could we do specifically right now, in terms of preventing that from happening? We have a bill in the House on raising the age of consent, for instance, which I'm hoping goes through this round. Are there other kinds of legalization measures that could be done? The Olympics are fast approaching. We are the receiving country, and we have people here who will be victimized at that event.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** The Olympics in Greece and the world football championship in Germany saw the trafficking of tens of thousands of extra women for the pleasure of sex tourists.

Canada can easily thwart that for the Olympics, simply by telling the visa staff in embassies and consulates around the world to be on the lookout for young women and for those behind these young women.

The Americans do it all the time. Their consulates and embassies watch for young women applying for visas, and who and what are behind them. They have actually identified thousands of girls, prior to their coming to the United States. Before issuing the visas, they say no, we know what's going on here.

For the Olympics in Vancouver, this message can easily be sent out. Again, these girls are not coming from England, France, and Germany; they will be coming from the impoverished countries. When you see them lining up for visas, you have to ask the question, how did they get the money, and what kind of work will they be doing? You could stop it at that point.

One of the strange things about Germany and the Netherlands is that they say the women who are coming there know exactly what they're doing. They don't speak the language, they don't have the business acumen, and they don't know the names of the streets—they don't know anything when they get there. How did they get there? Who was the facilitator? It's organized crime; that's always the facilitator.

These women suddenly show up and say, well, there's no pimp behind us. The brothels in the Netherlands and Germany take 50%; that's pimping and that's all it is. These women are not there independently.

In the streets of Rome, Paris, and Berlin, I saw the pimps in the dark alleys and shadowed cars. Those pimps belong to organized crime gangs; they will not let go of this because of the money. The Netherlands and Germany know who the gangs are, and the cops can't do a damn thing about it, because they can't figure out who's legal and who's illegal now. Once you open that floodgate, try to close it.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Victor, thank you, because your presentation has been absolutely amazing.

On another thing, when you're talking about education, I've been personally amazed by the lack of knowledge about the human trafficking here in Canada. In talking to RCMP and police officers, a lot of them lack the training. In talking to even the everyday people, even elected officials, the lack of knowledge about it has been absolutely amazing and astounding.

Could you comment on our role as the status of women committee in bringing this issue right up in Canadian faces? Concerning what you said about men refusing to get involved, those laws have to be put in place. They have to be involved or be criminalized if they participate. The johns are the ones who should be criminalized, not the poor victims. Could you comment on the status of women committee here, because we have really taken this on this term. We have fought to take it on, and I'd just like your comments on it.

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** When I look at this issue around the world, it strikes me as very sad that it is not a top priority with all women's organizations and groups involved in human rights. This is a modern-day human rights tragedy of epic proportions. That's what it is. We see that 800,000 young women are trafficked every year into foreign countries, not to mention the millions who are internally trafficked into the sex trade, and no one is speaking out and saying this is a travesty. About the only argument we occasionally hear is the legalization argument, and it bothers me. This is an issue about dignity. I never, ever would stand around and allow this to happen to my daughter, and no one else would want it to happen to theirs.

Most of these young women who I've pulled out of some of the brothels in places like Kosovo were sad teenaged girls. They were just starting out their lives, and their lives are destroyed by disease—psychologically, spiritually, and medically. This has to be a top priority for all nations, for anyone who is involved in human rights, and particularly for women's groups, because this is about women and girls.

In Canada, I am proud to say that the RCMP have taken this and put it front and centre. There are a number of people I've met within the RCMP—one is Sergeant Lori Lowe—who are making this a priority and are trying to make certain this does not happen in Canada and doesn't explode on the streets of Canada, but we have to be aware.

One of the problems with this whole thing is that we hear about prostitutes and immediately dismiss these women. Who cares about them? They're just whores. The thing is that when you look into their eyes, you see they are victims. The vast majority are victims. They don't want to be there. It is our responsibility to try to do something to get them off the streets and not to recruit even more onto the streets of Canada.

Again, we can take a lead role in the whole issue of trafficking, of women being forced or somehow duped into prostitution, and play the card that's called dignity, which is the most important thing that we live for.

•(1220)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Malarek.

Ms. Mourani has asked for a minute for one question. Then we are going to have to close off this section of our meeting.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Thank you for your generosity, Madam Chair.

Mr. Malarek, I just have one question. We have had many witnesses who told us that the public needs to be made aware of the impact of the sex trade on prostitution, stripper bars, and so on.

Now I've read that the groups defending sex work are funded by the government. At the same time, cuts at Status of Women will make it very complicated for women to defend their rights.

I find it a bit strange—tell me if I'm wrong—that groups defending sex work are funded from taxpayers' money, when we are being told that money must be put into making the public aware of the fact that prostitution tramples on women's rights.

Don't you think that if these groups are being funded, it should stop, and our money should instead be invested in educating the public about prostitution and its impact on women?

[*English*]

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** If sex trade workers are being funded by taxpayers' money, I would find that shocking and it should stop. If you really want to know the impact of this trade on the vast majority of women, all you would have to do is go to Norma Hotaling, who has an organization out of San Francisco. They will bring thousands of women and young girls forward to tell every one of you what has happened to them and the reality of their lives.

Again, I question this. Who are these advocates? Who is behind them? There is no union. These girls out there are controlled by pimps. They do not speak for themselves. Who is behind this so-called group that wants to promote the sex trade?

Again, I will say, there are women who want to do this—fine. The vast majority don't. Who is speaking for the vast majority? That's the problem. Who is funding this? If the government is funding this, they should stop. If these women believe that the sex trade work is a great place to be, why shouldn't they just fund themselves? Why don't the brothel owners and massage parlour owners, who are making huge amounts of money, fund them? We shouldn't be funding that.

What we should be funding are victims and people who want out, to give them an opportunity to get out. It really bothers me, if this is correct, that any money would go to these so-called sex trade workers and we would say, now we're going to listen to you because you speak for it. They speak for no one. They speak for a handful of people. All the studies show that 89% to 92% of women want out. They want out. Who are they speaking for? Are you giving them money to speak for 8% or 9%? Let them do what they want to do,

but we have to give the opportunity to young women who don't want to be in this a way out. We have to create that situation for them, not make it easier for johns, not make it easier for clients, not make it easier for pimps and brothel owners. That's what we're doing. When you tolerate, you create a really bad situation, and that's what we've done over the last number of years. Money for sex workers to promote—forget it.

•(1225)

**The Chair:** Mr. Malarek, have you had an opportunity to appear before the subcommittee that's looking at the whole issue of decriminalization of the prostitution issue? Have you had an opportunity to appear before that subcommittee?

**Mr. Victor Malarek:** No, I haven't, nor have I been invited, but I certainly would go.

**The Chair:** I think they have just reconvened very recently, and we might want to pass on a suggestion that you might want to appear before them.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Can I speak to that?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I happen to be a member of that subcommittee, and at this point there have not been any new witnesses able to present. A lot of witnesses presented previously and that is what the report is being suggested on at this point.

I certainly think this has been absolutely invaluable—the presentation that we've heard here today and your witnessing. It's phenomenal. I certainly plan on taking the blues from this meeting to that committee and circulating them so they have the benefit of at least reading the presentation, which will lack some of the impact, because certainly, Mr. Malarek, your presentation is excellent. I do plan on doing that.

**The Chair:** A suggestion might be that I put a letter together as the chair to whoever is chairing that subcommittee strongly urging them to allow Mr. Malarek the opportunity to present to the committee.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I would appreciate that. That would be very welcome. I would suggest if we're going to do this, that we do it soon. The chair is Mr. Maloney.

**The Chair:** We'll do it this afternoon.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr. Malarek, there aren't words to be able to tell you how much we not only appreciate your taking the time today but for all the work you've done on many issues like this on behalf of all of the women, not only in Canada but worldwide. I hope God keeps you safe and strong and that you continue to do the work. We will continue to stay in touch as we move forward on our report.

Thank you very much.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** The committee will now move in camera to deal with recommendations.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

---







**Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons**

**Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes**

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**