

deprived and the misguided that organized crime gets its foothold and builds its foundation.

It is in my view, a sad commentary on our society and our concern for order and justice that we consistently seek to pursue organized crime, only through inquiries which seek, often in vain, to establish criminal behaviour and develop a case for the Crown against a person or persons. Surely it is time we moved one step further in order to come a little closer to the causes of organized crime itself and to identify the social problems which spawn generation after generation of organized criminal activity.

While the Crown obviously has a continuing responsibility to ensure that organized criminal activity is placed under relentless pressure from law enforcement agencies at all levels, surely we who legislate and shape the very laws that the Crown must enforce have a continuing responsibility to seek ways and means to reduce the conditions which spawn the criminality against which our laws are supposed to stand. For example, our urban areas are prone to the influence of organized crime because, whether we like it or not, organized crime fills a void created by social neglect, corrupt administration in some cases, and a frequent lack or failure in moral leadership. In many respects, our penal institutions become the junior colleges for organized crime, training those who are first offenders to embrace more extensive and developed commitments to criminal activity.

If crime as it is perpetrated in organized or disorganized fashion is the disease, if society in its frailty and vulnerability is the patient, then government must assume the role not only of the physician administering to the symptoms but of a general practitioner prepared to practice preventive medicine. There are those, I know, who will say that even if all poverty is erased, if you bring prosperity to all, if you grant equality of opportunity to all, there will still be a criminal element eager to make a fast buck through illegal means. But, Mr. Speaker, that is not the point. The point is that if there is less poverty, if there is less disparity within a community between those who have and those who have not, if there is more equity, if there is more social justice, there will be less crime.

• (1530)

Often, in discharging those duties that related to my years on the bench, I was impressed by one of the most basic frustrations plaguing our legal system and its ability to serve both as a source of justice and a deterrent to crime. I became aware, not without some very personal anguish, that principles of justice, concepts of right and wrong, can rarely be explained to someone who has only experienced injustice and who has never known the value of choosing right over wrong. We have to face up to the fact that for too many Canadians our system is an economic prison wherein daily indignities and injustices of a social and personal nature are the only tangible messengers of our way of life.

For many, this prison is made more dreadful by a tide of rising expectations which they can, in reality, have no hope of ever attaining. Rebuffed in their search for work, humiliated at the supermarket, restrained in their efforts for growth and self-realization, the poor and disadvantaged could very well think that our system is in itself an

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organized conspiracy which, as far as they are concerned, perpetrated criminal actions upon them. As a judge, I saw these people in my courtroom daily and I knew that criminal activity may have been their only outlet, their only way of saving some self-respect. Yet I knew, too, that prosecution must continue to be the front line response to all criminal activity. It is, after all, a basic line of defence for social order and balance. But that does not stop me or hundreds of others from asking whether, indeed, we have placed all our commitment in this area of balance and order purely on the enforcement side, and whether the time has not come for an equal and concurrent commitment on the side of social justice and preventive law.

Mr. Speaker, the basic principle of physics, that every reaction originated from an original action of equal intensity and strength, might have some application here, at least to help us understand the human side. We respond to the criminal with imprisonment and penalty. Do we ever ask ourselves what it is the criminal is responding to in committing the crime? Have we really been prepared to ask this question institutionally, in our governments and courts? I submit that in real terms we have not. Frankly, criminals and prison reform have never been the stuff of partisan political gain except when everyone is only too pleased to call for tougher laws or tighter prisons.

The opportunity we have today to deal with the effects of organized crime should not be allowed to exclude a more in-depth analysis of the deeper causes, both social and political, of organized crime. In my view there is a need for renewed federal-provincial interest in organized crime as something beyond the operative level of police co-operation and information-sharing. There is now a clear and present need for a program of political activity aimed at a joint attack on the conditions that cause organized crime. The inquiries into labour racketeering now being carried on in Quebec are only a beginning.

We must be prepared to look at the structure of municipal, provincial and federal government to seek out those areas wherein organized crime can gain or purchase influence. We must look at the awarding of contracts, the financial support offered politicians, all the areas that politicians prefer not to discuss. Organized crime grows when there are conditions that encourage its growth. We must examine these conditions. We must do so carefully. We must do so methodically.

Mr. Speaker, it is fashionable to make fun of royal commissions and their often meandering and lack-lustre use of time and resources in the pursuit of recommendations that are often vague and inconclusive. In the matter of organized crime, I wonder whether, rather than the creation of some new inquiry that can only really examine the superficial actions committed at the lowest echelons of syndicated criminal activity, this parliament might not consider a royal commission into the causes of organized crime, a commission that would concentrate on the social and economic conditions that breed organized crime and provide the atmosphere and sense of despair upon which organized crime depends.

The commission should, most properly, have both federal and provincial participation and seek to examine the conditions of social and economic environment that breed criminal activity; the relationship between organized