

### Organized Crime

brought before the House today. I would like to commence my few remarks by reminding the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) that he exhibits an obvious double standard when he speaks of the weight he wants the House to place on the advice of police officers with respect to increasing the powers for wiretapping. He admonishes us not to go against the advice of the police. But, Mr. Speaker, what group was more vocal in opposition to capital punishment than the police forces of this country? Did the Minister of Justice give them any more than lip service at that time? What the minister and the government wish to do obviously depends on their interpretation, not what the police wish to do.

It is also obvious that the minister's opposition to a royal commission inquiry on crime is based on equally tenuous logic. He argues that it is not a suitable forum, and the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) indicated that the police would have to divulge sources of information and that all this would set back crime prevention in this country. I do not think that would stand the test of logic, either. There is a provision in the Federal Court Act that the Solicitor General never fails to utilize when it suits him, and perhaps when it is necessary as well. I will not comment on that. Section 41(2) permits essential information in the eyes of the government—without the supervision of a judge, incidentally—to be withheld. I am certain that a royal commission with proper terms of reference could ensure that equal precautions could be taken so that if it appeared that the cause of the police in any particular area was menaced, the very capable people in charge of a royal commission of this magnitude would take equal precautions to keep that type of evidence from being introduced.

A royal commission could do something that the CBC tried and failed to do, namely, it could bring to the attention of the people of Canada, in the best possible way, the need for the maximum amount of effort to combat the encroachment of organized crime in this country. It would provide a forum where everyone who had anything to contribute and wished to do so, could appear without fear, favour, suspicion of collusion or any other unworthy motive. People could come and tell what they know, and make recommendations. All Canadians from coast to coast, and all law enforcement agencies could join in a crusade against organized crime. That is what it is going to take at this time to stop the ever-increasing encroachment of crime in all areas of society in this country.

Everyone who has studied the subject knows that the main targets of organized crime at this time are legitimate businesses. If you look beneath the surface you find their initiatives in industries such as trucking, waste disposal, real estate, construction, money lending—even the banks are not immune. As a senior official of the state of Michigan pointed out recently, the Americans are finding out there is a tendency for loansharking to be integrated in some banks. There have not been any prosecutions yet in the state of Michigan, but it has been indicated that there is evidence of mob influence pervading some banking institutions. In any event, banks are being victimized by bad loans and are being ripped off by various confidence schemes.

[Mr. MacKay.]

If we are to improve our capacity to combat organized crime, we have to look at various initiatives and at the very structure of our institutions. It is interesting that the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice both had to take some responsibility for this situation, in effect. That used not to be the case. As no other speaker has dealt with this particular topic, it seems to me it would be useful to look back and see the way things used to be when the RCMP only had to report to the minister of justice, which was one of the senior portfolios in parliament at an earlier time but which has lost some of its clout.

● (1730)

In this regard, it is interesting to see what the opinion was at the time the portfolio of solicitor general was created. It is also interesting to recall some of the predictions made at that time. I wish to read briefly from an article in the December 22, 1965, edition of the *Toronto Star* by a reporter who wrote this fairly comprehensive article. He wrote:

Prime Minister Pearson's cabinet reorganization last week contained a "sleeper" which attracted less attention than it deserved. This was the proposed splitting up of the functions of the Department of Justice.

Under this arrangement, the justice department will continue to administer the federal courts, draft legislation, and conduct litigation and prosecutions for the government. But a new department, headed by the Solicitor General, will administer the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the penitentiaries and the parole board.

It, is difficult to see any advantage in this change under Canadian conditions. The great problem in this country, in matters of justice and law enforcement, has always been the complicated and awkward division of responsibility between the federal government and the provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we see that that still continues to be the case. The article continues:

The confusion that already exists could be aggravated further by dividing the federal jurisdiction between two departments.

I will not read the entire article. One very relevant and somehow familiar passage is as follows:

It is not at all clear, in fact, what the government has in mind in proposing the change. At his press conference last Friday, Mr. Pearson spoke rather vaguely of the need for a more vigorous fight against organized crime.

Doesn't that have a funny ring over ten years later?

It is probable that the poor showing the department made in the Rivard affair contributed to the decision that a change was necessary.

But here again the remedy may only aggravate the disease. As former justice minister Davie Fulton put it this week, "It would be far more likely under the new setup that an RCMP report would never get to the Department of Justice."

It would appear the Solicitor General may have some problems there as well.

What the department needs, in fact—

That is, the Department of Justice.

—is not a hasty amputation but a careful reorganization to improve co-ordination between its various branches.

There is something to be gained by pondering the import of that brief excerpt from a 1965 newspaper. In the over ten years that have since elapsed we have not seen much of a national effort nor many results in combatting organized crime. True, the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice have read into the record some impressive accomplishments. I