

The Address—Mr. Brewin

when they come out of jail, I feel that it would be advisable to decide in what way and after how many years an ex-convict whose behaviour has been beyond reproach and who has shown every intention of behaving like a first class citizen could enjoy that privilege, could have his judicial record put aside, a record which erects a wall of shame, as we know, and prevents a lot of people from helping him to use his human resources to the benefit of the Canadian economy.

Mr. Speaker, what procedure will be adopted to do away with those judicial records? It does not matter, but allow me to suggest one. Other suggestions will undoubtedly be made, better or just as good, but I think that the procedure will have to be simple, available to all, and inexpensive. For instance, a simple request could be submitted to the Exchequer Court with a written notice and registered letter informing the federal and provincial departments of Justice that, within a certain period of time after the publication of the said notice in the *Canada Gazette*, if there is no serious objection to the elimination of the applicant's judicial record, a judgment or decision might automatically be made on this simple request by the Exchequer Court.

This is a rather simple method, in my opinion, which could be embodied in a piece of legislation that the government could bring into effect as soon as possible.

This is a rather important matter, and if former convicts are to occupy choice positions and become first class citizens within our society, prompt action is required. In this way, we shall prevent law-breakers from becoming habitual offenders. We shall enable prisoners, while they are paying their debt to society, to hope for a better life. Thus, those people could hope to find a place in society when they leave the penitentiaries and, through good behaviour and proof of their good will, obtain the elimination of a judicial record that otherwise would haunt them for the rest of their life.

I have practised law long enough before criminal and civil courts to know that those judicial records often serve a purpose other than the one they should serve.

I should like to end my remarks by saying that unless the state assumes the responsibility for this training, for giving this instruction in penitentiaries, unless the state takes the initiative of opening the doors of the civil service, hence government jobs, unless the state takes the initiative of forming an organization to help and advise the prisoners

after they have paid their debt to society, unless the state gives them hope of becoming first class citizens in society, then we shall have an ever-increasing number of habitual criminals.

In view of the population increase, more people will be unable to find their niche in society and the number of old offenders and of crimes will continue to grow. This involves the lives and welfare of our citizens and the improvement of Canada's economic position.

I spoke of human resources as one of the greatest resource we have. Well, let us use what we have. When we have done that, we can be satisfied that we have done a very good job in this field.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the various ministers of justice, both federal and provincial. They are responsible for the administration of justice and theirs is not an easy job. They must, however, have a great deal of patience and good will to seek the necessary solutions and not change into a public debate the discussions which should be held around a table.

I know the federal and the Quebec minister of justice personally. I have utmost respect for them. I know they are working in the interest of all the citizens of this country.

Now, I do not want to resume my seat before giving my opinion, maybe a little ahead of time on capital punishment. I am against the complete abolition of capital punishment because, under these circumstances, it is justified in the case of certain special crimes, particularly for the murder of guards in penitentiaries.

This is my opinion on the subject. I had the opportunity to meet many criminals in the past, when I was crown attorney in Montreal, and I have come to the conclusion that capital punishment still frightens some people enough to keep them from actions which they should not commit.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience and I hope that the government will grant these remarks the attention which I have been giving them for some time, for I consider the rehabilitation of prisoners a problem of vital importance.

• (9:20 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): I am glad to be able to express my sincere congratulations to the hon. members for Dollard (Mr. Goyer) and York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury) for the excellent opening of this