

*Supply—Justice*

The situation is examined; serious inquiries are made before anyone is paroled. This, I have found out. There have been mistakes. But anyone, just like us, can make mistakes. In fact, as long as we are human, we will see mistakes made and we will make some ourselves. Those who never make any are not here with us, but in another department in Montreal.

Mr. Chairman, all this brings me to say to the Minister of Justice that his department is important, because when we speak of justice, in Canada or in a given province, justice in my view means the basis of a social structure that can stand up on its own, of a social structure that can gain in value, and that basis, which is equal justice for all, must be applied at all levels throughout this large country of ours.

Mr. Chairman, we shall certainly pass the estimates of the Department of Justice. However, I should like the minister to take into consideration the representations which I have just made with regard to our vandals in the province of Quebec, and also the rehabilitation especially of our young people or not so young who come out of prison or out of the penitentiary, not to mention the matter of capital punishment which must be voted on seriously, without partisan politics and in the best interest of the Canadian people who deserve all the protection we can give them, as their elected representatives, here in the House of Commons.

● (9:10 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. Brewin:** Mr. Chairman, I intend to direct my remarks through you, chiefly to the Minister of Justice, but before doing so I would like to make a brief reference to the contribution of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I am sorry he is not in the chamber at the moment but I have no doubt he will read what I have to say. The hon. member made an attack upon certain other hon. members in connection with the Truscott case. I do not propose to discuss that case, but I do want to suggest to the hon. member that respect for the courts of justice does not mean that one does not and cannot criticize in a respectful way the decisions of the courts, even of the very highest courts.

If a member has a profound conviction of the innocence of somebody, even though it may be that the courts have held him guilty, then it is the duty of that member to do all he can in the interests of justice to see that justice is done, even though this may involve

[Mr. Caouette.]

something that some people may regard as disrespect for the courts. I would remind the hon. member, as I think has already been done, that one of the eminent judges of the Supreme Court of Canada took a different view of the Truscott case. I would also remind the hon. member that it is not just a few freaks and strange people who are still concerned about the Truscott case. I would call his attention to an editorial in the Montreal *Star* of October 28, again appealing for another look at the Truscott case and for his early release on parole.

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Chairman, has many important responsibilities. I agree with the implications of the speeches by the hon. member for Bow River and the hon. member for Vancouver East when they indicated that in their view there was a great need for the fresh winds of reforming zeal to sweep through the Department of Justice, and a very great need for that reforming zeal to be translated into modern, up to date and enlightened legislation, particularly in the field of criminal law, and no doubt in other fields as well.

The minister, as has been said, is a young man. He is an able minister. He has the reputation, which no doubt is well earned, of being a liberal with a small "l", and the more of those there are on the treasury benches the better it will be. I would like to say we all wish him well, in his very important task as Minister of Justice. However, Mr. Chairman, I want to discuss tonight what I think is the most important of all his duties. I refer to his responsibility as the principal constitutional adviser of the government. This is always important in a federal system, but it is absolutely crucial at the present time.

On September 28, speaking in a television interview, the Prime Minister said that the current national unity crisis is a threat to the survival of Canada, and he appealed to all political parties to follow the precedents set in wartime and to unite on basic objectives. Mr. Chairman, that is precisely what we in this party would like to do, but it is quite useless to expect us to unite on these issues and then deny the house any reasonable opportunity to discuss them.

Make no mistake about it, the current crisis of national unity has constitutional implications. These cannot be ignored. They cannot be avoided, shoved under a rug, or dealt with in a piecemeal way. They must be faced and the one place to face them is right here in parliament. I am going to invite the