

### *Young Offenders Act*

This is why I urge the minister, even if this may not seem in order, even if the matter does not come under federal jurisdiction, to do something.

Mr. Speaker, if we keep hiding behind jurisdictions, if the constitution and financial reasons keep us from settling this problem, if Ottawa says: "This is a problem pertaining to Quebec", and if Quebec says: "We have no money, let Ottawa provide us with some", the young will continue to rot, to fill unhealthy rehabilitation centres, and the problem will remain unsolved.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I think that the Solicitor General who does understand the nature of the problem will do everything in his power to hustle Quebec—in case Quebec is unable to assume its responsibilities in this area—and make them appoint a larger number of capable judges from among people who are interested in helping our youngsters, and thus solve the problem.

To further support my claim, let me give you some official figures. I will only tell you the number of cases heard during the month of December, 1970 by Mr. Justice Léandre Prévost of the welfare court.

On December 1, Justice Prévost disposed of 24 cases. A judge's day, like that of a member of Parliament, has only 24 hours. Accordingly, the conclusion is that not much time was devoted to each case. It is not his fault, it is the system! One cannot solve the problem simply by blamming the Constitution for it.

On December 2, the judge heard 21 cases. On December 4, 13 cases. On December 7, 20 cases. On December 9, 28 appearances, 28 cases, and so forth. On December 28, 36 cases. On some days, he heard more than 55 cases, so that for the month of December, he heard a total of 258 cases.

I shall say more about this. From January 1 to December 31 inclusive, 1970, Justice Léandre Prévost, who does his possible best, heard 2,467 cases about young people who need personalized understanding, who need a helping hand.

One probation officer may have to deal with very many young people. The judge can only read the file quickly and try to assess each case to the best of his knowledge. Under these conditions, you cannot expect a man to work more than 24 hours a day.

A judge told me last Thursday: "Give us the tools, we will do the job". Who indeed should provide these tools, Mr. Speaker, if not federal and provincial members? We must make up our minds once and for all.

Before resuming my seat, I urge again the minister to give the tools to people dealing with this problem so that they can do their job in a truly human fashion with a view to rehabilitating individuals.

I would hate to hear the minister say that he cannot act because this is beyond his jurisdiction. If the Solicitor General is really sincere, and I do not doubt it, and wishes to help young delinquents, he will do everything in his power to wake Quebec up so that this province will assume its responsibilities, so that we will really be able to give proper tools to the people who work in this

[Mr. Fortin.]

field to solve the problem, especially by showing more concern for rehabilitation than for criminality.

Mr. Speaker, welfare courts as well as training centres should smell less of criminals, of charges, of legal technicalities and more of understanding, humanization, personal service given to an individual who maybe only waits for this chance to survive.

I have here some very interesting statistics taken from the magazine *Le jeune délinquant homicide* which was printed after a seminar held at Boscoville, in Montreal, on June 10, 1970. Thirteen cases are shown, without names, of young people guilty of murder and manslaughter.

At first sight, they seem guilty, dangerous and they must be sent to prison. Analyzing the picture and studying the chapter entitled "Understanding between parents", one finds that most cases relate to disputes, poor understanding, misunderstanding between common law partners, separated couples and so on.

Can the youngster who has been brought up in such surroundings be blamed? No. It will then be necessary in social welfare courts and rehabilitation centres to take into account that he has suffered from lack of understanding. Let us give him that understanding. He has been lacking fatherly and motherly love. Let us give him that love. He has asked for a break, the possibility of a dialogue. Let us give him that break, that possibility of a dialogue and then the frequency of juvenile delinquency or relapse will surely decrease.

Mr. Justice Trahan told me something that cut me to the heart but which was true. Incidentally, he is a really remarkable man. He told me: "André, I heard the cases of some fathers, then I judged their sons and today, I judge their grandsons".

Mr. Speaker, this proves that our system is topsy-turvy and if we do not set it right, we shall have to recognize that it is administered by the most mixed-up people that ever existed.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Solicitor General is aware of the problem and that he is prepared to do his utmost to solve it. I would like him to agree with me that the bill is not enough, and that neither the administrative, legal or constitutional barriers, nor the financial limitations should prevent us from taking the necessary steps. No price is too high to guarantee the sound and normal development of a human being, particularly if that person is defenceless and resourceless.

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I spoke on Bill C-192 which is now under consideration, I drew the attention of the Solicitor General (Mr. Goyer) on the advisability of amending some provisions of that bill. I referred to clause 2(o), clause 17(1)(2), clause 30(1)(4)(5), clause 59(2)(a)(b) and clause 60(4).

I think the government is taking a forward step in introducing this bill. I should like, however, to point out a specific aspect of the bill, namely the cause of delinquency in our country. Some reasons prompted the government to amend the Juvenile Delinquents Act and it is surely not because that legislation had become useless.