

the hope that it would recommend some new form of co-ordinated law enforcement in Canada. Are we to deal with organized crime by ignoring and acting contrary to the recommendations of the principal police authorities of this country? That does not seem to me to be co-ordinated law enforcement.

**Mr. Leggatt:** There are judicial authorities, too, and you are the Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Basford:** Should we, as parliamentarians, close our minds and our ears to what the police forces of this country are telling us as to what we need in terms of legislation?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Who is running this country, anyhow?

**Mr. Basford:** The issue raised by the hon. member for New Westminster is important. We have, and need, co-ordinated law enforcement. The Solicitor General spoke in detail and in specifics about joint force operations. I have indicated, however, that the enforcement of the Criminal Code is a provincial responsibility. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) asked me a very pertinent question the other day about narcotics, immigration and other matters which clearly are within federal authority and control. However, the great bulk of the criminal law of this country is enforced by provincial attorneys general and provincial police forces.

On Monday I undertook to consult provincial attorneys general. I have talked with the attorneys general of British Columbia and Ontario, and I had communication through my office with the minister of justice of the province of Quebec. All the attorneys general of Canada and all the solicitors general of Canada and I will be meeting in Ottawa during the last week in June. However, I spoke with the attorneys general of the largest provinces in the country—certainly, by all indications, the three provinces in which there is the most organized crime—and they said they do not want to see some unilateral federal action without consultation with them. Of course, they will have to speak for themselves. We have agreed that there should be such consultation during our conference at the end of June. However, here we have the NDP and the official opposition saying that we should make some easy, political decision. They claim we should have better co-ordinated law enforcement and that we should make some unilateral decision, without proper consultation and co-ordination with provincial attorneys general who are responsible for the administration of the Criminal Code.

● (1720)

Surely, if we are to be effective in dealing with organized crime in Canada, we cannot make these kinds of unilateral decisions. In the search for the most effective way of dealing with organized crime these decisions should only be made after the closest possible consultation and co-ordination with provincial attorneys general and law enforcement officials. I, therefore, think it would be silly to accept this motion today when there has not been an opportunity for that kind of consultation and when the attorneys general of three provinces have told me

### *Organized Crime*

they do not want me to make a decision until they have had a chance to discuss the matter with me further.

There has been a great deal of reference to the United States in the course of debate, with the suggestion that there is better control of organized crime there. I disagree with that. I think it is an irresponsible reflection on the police forces and law enforcement authorities of this country. There has been the inference that the United States deals with organized crime better than we do, but I suspect if that were so we would not be encountering the problem we have in Canada today. Organized crime is not a domestic Canadian industry; it is being imported.

In British Columbia, through a law enforcement unit comprised of the RCMP and others, we have upgraded law enforcement in the area of narcotics. It costs \$8,000 to hire a courier to carry heroin from the golden triangle of Southeast Asia to Canada, while in the United States it only costs \$2,000. The substantial difference is caused by the effectiveness of law enforcement in this country, where couriers are being apprehended at a far more effective rate than in the United States. So I want to resist and reject the inference of some hon. members that law enforcement authorities in the United States do a better job than our own.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. minister, but his allotted time has expired. He may continue, however, if there is unanimous consent.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Basford:** I am grateful for that co-operation, Mr. Speaker. I want to conclude by referring to British Columbia, because in moving the motion the hon. member for New Westminster referred to the co-ordinated law enforcement unit that operates in the province. Either this afternoon or tomorrow a proposal will be published in Victoria by that unit which was discussed with the attorney general of British Columbia and myself, as well as the Solicitor General and the health ministers of both governments, regarding the heroin trade. On March 24 we issued a joint statement on behalf of both governments, assigning the most senior law enforcement officers with experience in the area of drugs to examine the question of supply and demand. The work of that task force is almost completed and I expect to have a report very shortly. Both governments will then be able to ensure the best possible co-ordination to tackle the hard drug trade in Canada.

The hon. member calls for an inquiry because he claims we need greater co-ordination of police efforts. One need only look at what is going on to realize the degree of co-ordination that exists. The police forces and governments are continually working to improve that co-ordination, and I know we are not going to get it by making unilateral and immensely important decisions on a crime inquiry contrary to the advice of every senior police officer in the country.

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say to the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) that I wholeheartedly support the motion he