

Adjournment Debate

hope that the Minister of Justice intends to do so, and to do so in the reasonably near future.

I have to say that I have had a research assistant trying to deal with this problem for the past six months and to liaise with the Minister. He has been unable to meet with the staff of the Department on this subject because of one problem after another that has presented itself. The time has come to deal with this matter, and to deal with it promptly. I hope that we will not have another delay as referred to by the Minister of Justice in the press just yesterday. He was quoted as saying that he agrees that there is a demand for criminal justice law reform but he feels that it has to be a slow and laborious exercise. Heavens, Mr. Speaker, the time for slow and laborious exercise has certainly passed in the case of gun control.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to read a statement to the House at this time concerning Private Members' Business for Thursday, September 17, 1987.

The Hon. Member for LaSalle (Mr. Lanthier) has withdrawn his Bill, Bill C-259, which, according to the order of precedence, would be scheduled for debate on Thursday, September 17, 1987. It has been impossible to arrange for any other item of Private Members' Business to take its place on that day. Therefore, no notice will be published for Private Members' Hour on Thursday. The House will continue with the business before it prior to that time pursuant to Standing Order 39(3)(b).

The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 42(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

• (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—SENTENCE IN QUEBEC
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MURDER CASE—CALL FOR REFORM OF
CRIMINAL LAW

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, I know that you are well aware of the infamous case of Denis Lortie. You will recall that he is the man who, some three years ago, burst into the Quebec National Assembly carrying two sub-machine guns. Interestingly enough, we were just talking about gun control legislation. Mr. Lortie stormed into the Quebec National Assembly carrying two sub-machine guns, and within the space of some 45 minutes he had killed three innocent government employees and wounded some 13 others.

At that time Lortie was convicted of first degree murder. He appealed that conviction, was granted a new trial, and finally in May of this year he pleaded guilty to three charges of second degree murder and nine charges of attempted murder. At that time he was sentenced by Mr. Justice Desjardins to a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment.

I do not know what you think of, Mr. Speaker, when you hear the words "life in prison". What do they in fact mean in the case of Lortie? Well, in the Lortie case a life sentence means that he can apply for parole after 10 years. Not only can he apply for parole after 10 years, but it has been decided that the three years he has already spent in prison will be part of that 10 years. In fact, he can apply for parole, and will likely be out on parole after seven years at the most, and that for the murder, whether first or second degree, of three people, and a conviction on the charge of attempted murder of nine others.

Is that life in prison? It does not mean life imprisonment to me. I suspect it does not mean life imprisonment to you, Mr. Speaker. I venture to say that it does not mean life imprisonment to the vast majority of Canadians. I suspect that Canadians probably think life imprisonment means what happened in the case of Rudolf Hess. Once sentenced to life imprisonment, he did serve the rest of his natural life in prison. Of course, that is not what life imprisonment means in the case of the sentence of Denis Lortie, even though the judge used the words "life in prison".

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you will recall another case that occurred very recently, the case of one Yves Trudeau. He has two nicknames. Some people know him as "Apache" Trudeau, and some people call him the "Mad Bumper". Yves Trudeau is a biker. He has confessed to murdering 43 people, and he is believed to have been involved in the murder of 40 others.

In exchange for turning police informer, Yves Trudeau was allowed to plead guilty to manslaughter. And he was sentenced, you guessed it, to life in prison. What does life in prison mean as far as Apache Trudeau is concerned? In his case, it means parole after seven years. This man admitted to killing 43 people and he is suspected of killing another 40, a total of 83 people. His sentence "life imprisonment" is seven years. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? Well, I cannot believe it. I know that by and large Canadians cannot believe it either.

Obviously we need something in the way of a major reform, at least in our sentencing in criminal cases and in our criminal justice system. The previous Government thought so too. It appointed something called the Canadian Sentencing Commission to study that problem. The Commission reported in March of this year. It said that there was a lack of public confidence in criminal sentencing, that there were great differences in sentencing for the same offences and that there were too many people being sent to jail for non-violent offences.