

*Capital Punishment*

crime, that it will take strong action to deal with it, and that it is prepared to reform the overly liberal provisions with regard to bail, parole and sentencing, Canadians are frightened. They have good cause to be frightened. They are looking for extreme remedies to solve a serious problem. I hope that the government will take its responsibilities seriously and will reassure Canadians that their safety is of paramount concern. Therefore, I hope the government will look favourably on the motion my colleague has proposed.

Last evening, the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand), alluding to the proposal made by my colleague, suggested that if this motion were passed it might not be possible for a person who had, for example, suffered a heart attack, to obtain medical attention if it were made necessary for the Parole Board to approve absence with escort. As I understand it, the amendment would not affect the ability of the inmate to receive medical attention. It would affect only those prisoners who are released temporarily for humanitarian or rehabilitative purposes. It makes no mention of medical purposes. In my judgment, if a prisoner needed, on grounds of medical necessity, to go out of prison with escort, perhaps to go to hospital, that would be possible.

It cannot be stressed too often that Canadians are disturbed by the increase in violent crime. The increase in the last several years is demonstrable statistically and from one's reading of the newspapers. Clearly, violent crime is on the rise in Canada. Canadians are entitled to expect assurance that the government will do everything it can to put the security of the Canadian public before any other consideration.

● (1240)

Any measure which is reasonable, moral and just which can be taken to provide safety for the Canadian public should, in fact, be taken. The reason we are in this political situation today, where there is a question about the legitimacy of the government putting forward the legislation now before the House, is the government's failure to come to grips with this issue. They have failed to prove to Canadians that they take seriously the issue of violent crime. The Canadian public do not feel that the government regards public safety as a concern.

As an illustration of the way the government has acted in this area which cannot help but lead to cynicism and doubt on the part of many Canadians, I refer hon. members to the exchange last fall when I pointed out the fact that one half of the people in Toronto charged with murder were out on bail at that time. This concerned me. I felt there was a positive incentive for a person with the prospect of being convicted to violate the terms of his bail. I placed a question on the order paper asking the Solicitor General what percentage of those persons charged with three very serious categories of crime, murder, arson and rape, and granted bail had violated the terms of their bail.

The federal government has the responsibility of passing legislation dealing with bail, parole, prison security, and so on. Obviously, the onus is on the federal government to monitor the effect of these laws, to keep up-to-date statistics about the way they work and to make amendments where it is proved those laws are not functioning properly. I was distressed with the answer I received from the

Solicitor General, in which he indicated that the government had not bothered to keep statistics with regard to the percentage of persons violating the terms of their bail when they had been charged with serious crimes. The government's approach to this whole issue of violent crime is so lackadaisical that obviously Canadians cannot help being concerned about public security. They cannot help questioning the government's sincerity in dealing with this issue.

The motion moved by my colleague, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), is a good motion. It would provide some assurance to the public about the importance this parliament attaches to their right to safety. It would do something to ensure that abuses that can take place under the present legislation will be corrected. It should commend itself to all members of this House.

I hope that when the Solicitor General has had an opportunity to consult the legal authorities in his department he will realize that this provision cannot do anything but good for the Canadian people and our prison system. I hope that all members will give consideration to the motion, will support it enthusiastically and insure that it will be incorporated in the new legislation.

**Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, am concerned about motions Nos. 36 and 37, particularly motion No. 37 on which I would like to say a few words. I share the concerns of the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty) that there are some aspects of Bill C-84 which suggest that not enough protection is provided for society against the serious crime of murder. There is not enough protection against those individuals who perpetrate serious types of crime, those individuals who are not capable of any resolution or correction, with our present knowledge of reform of prisoners.

There should be something in this bill to give assurance to the citizens of Canada that we intend to protect them against these heinous crimes—granted, by some other method than capital punishment, and with this I agree. I do not see anything in the bill which precludes, in practical terms, a person who has committed first-degree murder or treason being out on the street again in 25 years' time. This concerns me because some people occasionally commit more than one murder on different occasions. If a person has been given one chance to reform, and commits a second murder, he should not be permitted a third chance to do the same thing. I feel the same way about those who commit treason. An attempt should be made to get something into the bill, even as late as this, to protect society against this kind of offender.

In view of these remarks, and in view of the fact that many members of this House are concerned about providing better protection against that type of prisoner, I would like to propose a subamendment to motion No. 37. If it meets with Your Honour's approval, I will read it at this time. It is:

That motion No. 37 be amended by striking out paragraph (a) thereof and substituting the following therefor:

"(a) Strike out lines 22 to 31 at page 8 and substituting the following therefor:

"669. The sentence to be pronounced against a person who is to be sentenced to imprisonment for life shall be,