

*Measures Against Crime*

taxpayers' point of view it was a most costly decision, as evidenced by the crime situation which confronts us today.

When the minister tells us crime is under control, I ask him this: when were ten people murdered in any city in this nation in any other period but this? Yet this happened a week ago in the City of Montreal.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Ten over a weekend.

**Mr. Coates:** These things have been happening because the government has failed to give leadership along the road to better rehabilitation processes and a more realistic approach to penology. We must get back there. We are as willing as any group of individuals in the House to help the country get back on that road, and we shall co-operate with the minister in any way we can to improve this legislation. There is no doubt that the legislation needs improvement. For instance, in the area of gun control there is one clause which suggests that if a gun is stolen from an owner and is used in the commission of a crime the owner must be made responsible or a party to the crime in question. Just how ridiculous can you be? The situation we then face is that if a car is stolen and used later in the commission of a bank robbery, the person whose car was stolen could be regarded as a party to the crime.

If parliament wishes to see the legislation improved I can think of no reason why we should not be able to come up with a package which everyone finds acceptable. After all, every member of the House wishes to have the best possible laws on our statute books to protect all Canadians.

● (2150)

The hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) has drawn my attention to another section which provides that everyone who has a weapon in his possession while attending, or on his way to attending a public meeting is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** On his way to a Conservative party meeting.

**Mr. Coates:** I would say it would be a meeting of the sort we have these days in the province of Quebec, and probably in the city of Quebec.

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** They are very convincing.

**Mr. Coates:** Well, I do not know whether the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is very convincing. I have watched him in the House for quite a while, and the way he was holding the podium the other night made me think he was going to jump through the television screen. If that is convincing then all I can say is that it is a new form of convincing.

Seriously, what type of meeting has the minister in mind here? If a person is carrying a concealed weapon for a number of clandestine reasons and goes to a meeting surely to goodness this should not be dealt with on summary conviction but should be an indictable offence.

In effect, the government is saying that it has to control guns because guns kill people. In this section it is saying that carrying a gun is no more serious than a speeding offence. I suggest we get our priorities straight. Many facets of this legislation will require a lot of examination

[Mr. Coates.]

and probably a lot of amendment before the package is perfect.

As the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) pointed out, there is nothing in the bill to deal with drug offences. I do not know whether the Minister of Justice, the Solicitor General, or the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) will be responsible for drug legislation, but will they please tell us, so we know who it is, and that something is being done about the problem. As I say, there is absolutely nothing to deal with the use of drugs in this peace and security legislation.

We all know that drugs are being sold and used in the penal institutions of this country and are responsible for most of the trouble in those institutions. It is a serious problem, one we should be made fully aware of before we are even asked to vote on this legislation. We must know exactly what the government is going to do about all aspects of crime in the nation. Perhaps it just wants the legislation to be cosmetic so as to please the great majority of the people who never see or handle a gun. By telling them that the government is going to put on controls, and do this and that, it hopes things will be a lot better in this nation. I suggest that gun control is not going to stop the crime in our streets at this particular time. Rather if we control the use of drugs we will be a long ways down the road to stopping crime. As I say, we had better hear something about this from the government before the legislation comes back to the House and is voted on.

This is one reason why I think the members of the House should examine the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North. It is a sensible amendment. Many people are upset about this legislation because they have not had the opportunity of placing their positions before the government and the public so far as amendment of the law is concerned. From this point of view, if the bill were sent back to committee and the government's program to control drugs were revealed and explained to the public, we would be in a much better position to make a decision about the value of the total package we are now being asked to consider.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say we must look seriously at some of the rehabilitation programs that have been proposed and which are underway within the penal system. I have before me a petition signed by hundreds of constituents of mine who live in an area called Apple River. The penitentiary service has endeavoured to carry out a project in that area with a private company, and has frightened and alarmed the people of the community. They are frightened and alarmed because no one told them of the danger inherent in such a program. Suddenly things started happening that presented a danger to the residents of the community.

As a result of this the people in the area called a meeting and asked to have the program withdrawn because of the dangers and risks it posed to them. Then at last the officials met with the people, who up until then were told nothing of the program. When people in a small community suddenly start facing inmates on the loose, naturally they become fearful. That is no way to carry out a rehabilitation program, and there are too many programs of this type under way at present. The Canadian penitentiary service must work with the people if they want to get