

*Parole Act*

which ought to be condemned rather than these individuals.

Let us also talk about organized crime. People choose crime as a profession, earn their living through crime. They have reached such a point of organization, Mr. Speaker, that newspapers are filled with articles telling about shocking things, especially in Quebec; scandal rises right and left which results in people becoming often sceptical about the due process of law and saying that there are two kinds of justice.

Moreover, in many respects justice is not the same for everybody. The bail system, for instance, is such that the rich, those who have money, obtain a kind of justice, while the poor, the man who has no money, the worker, the labourer, the family man whose sole income is the fruit of his toil over 40 or 50 hours of work, obtains a different kind of justice. Mr. Speaker, that such a system in some areas of our country still exist is revolting.

Let us consider also the system, the administration of penal institutions. We have reached the point—and the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is in a position to testify of this—where prisons in some areas have been turned into schools of crime. They indiscriminately put in the same bag people who have been sentenced for robbery, rape, murder, attempted murder, etc, and when prisoners are set free, they know a lot more about crime than when they were imprisoned in the first place.

It is unfortunate that millions of dollars are spent for penal institutions which do not always succeed in stopping crime. It is often found that they have become schools for criminals.

Under those circumstances, and to complete this gloomy but realistic picture, there is also the courts and what is called the judiciary administration which is often rotten. In fact, some judges are political creatures and render sentences based on half evidence. I could give many examples. But as I do not intend to have this debate dragging on I will dispense from giving them. But it remains that, hopefully, all my colleagues are aware that today's courts are not a good example for our youth.

With the parole system the members of the Parole Board are often in a position to reverse a court decision. For instance, a convict sentenced to life imprisonment or to 25 to 30 years may apply for parole under the law and the Parole Board is allowed to reverse the judge's decision. This is the reason for most critics against the Parole Act.

Many of our fellow citizens witness murders; then they learn that the accused, after lengthy procedures, has been condemned and they heave a sign of relief telling themselves that justice has been done. But what do they hear a few months later? That the criminal has been set free.

Several examples could be given. I shall mention only one, which concerns my area. A few years ago, a crime was committed at Victoriaville, a burglary. When the burglars came out, the policemen called to the scene tried to protect the owner's property. The bandits, armed with machine guns, had no hesitation in firing point-blank at the police officers. They wanted a shoot-out and, needless to say, their machine guns were not loaded with dummy shells.

When the bandits had planned this crime, they had foreseen that they might be forced to kill, and with those

[Mr. Fortin.]

arms, they were ready to do so. In any case, officer Collard was wounded and was unable to walk for eight months.

This bandit was captured, judged after many delays and sentenced to jail. He then applied for parole and, for the purposes of rehabilitation, the board granted his request. It is not because one plane crashes that we should stop all air transportation. In the same way, it is not because of one recidivist that the parole system should be abolished. In itself, the principle is excellent, it is its application which is not so good.

What happened was that the board agreed to grant parole to that gangster who lost no time in going to Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville and killing another policeman.

Mr. Speaker, as a police officer had been seriously wounded and another, a father of a family, murdered, the board should have realized that gangster was not likely to rehabilitate.

Even though we believe in the principle of parole for the reason that it may be possible that a human being could be rehabilitated in a normal society and comply with its laws, the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) should reconsider his position on the administration of the law and here is the reason.

All hon. members will recall that, two years ago I believe, Parliament discussed a bill on juvenile delinquents. Bill C-192 raised protests from a lot of the people involved.

It happens that the problem of juvenile delinquents can be summed up in one fact: If he has committed a crime, in 80 per cent of the cases, according to the evidence of the witnesses before the committee, it is because the family environment he spent his youth in did not exist, the parents not being there, or was "rotten". Mr. Speaker, the result is that this young boy or girl enters naturally, against his or her will, the path of crime. Then he is picked up, as people will say, appears before a welfare court and is judged. Then, he is placed in a kind of training institution, with all kinds of young criminals.

These young people have no right to parole, under the laws governing them. However, these are young people who could rehabilitate themselves, much more than hardened criminals who have repeated 8, 10 or 15 times.

This is the exact criticism I want to make about the Parole Act under which, in many cases, hardened criminals are released, while juvenile delinquents remain in jail. If the minister's arguments as regards rehabilitation are valid, if his faith in rehabilitation is reasoned and justified in the case of certain criminals, I do not see why this benefit of parole could not be applied even more to young people.

Mr. Speaker—and I ask the minister to give us these figures—how many probation officers are there for young offenders? How many young offenders, when they are released, benefit from the assistance of a probation officer to re-establish themselves in society? The young person who had no family, no friend, no one to guide him in life, who had no serious mother or father, goes back to free society with the same means when released. The same causes will involve the same effects. Whenever he is hungry, whenever he is tempted by what is displayed in