

Organized Crime

● (1720)

Let me go over the facts again. In 1970 he was convicted and sent up for 14 years. On June 15 he escaped. Not until July were extradition papers finally signed by the Department of Justice in Ottawa. But absolutely nothing was done with those papers. Mr. Spatero was in Buffalo and everyone knew he was in Buffalo. The New York state people were doing their utmost to pin something on him so that he could be put away, because he is a recognized, dangerous figure. Reporters from the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun* interviewed him on October 25. At the same time, sir, the district attorney in Buffalo publicly indicated his displeasure because the authorities could not nail him for anything. The papers from Ottawa simply had never reached Washington. Hence, they had never gone from Washington to Buffalo because they were not in the United States.

It looks to me as if this case goes far beyond mere bureaucratic bungling in Ottawa. What happened goes beyond coincidence. I could give more examples like this, but will not bore the House with them. Events like this, linked with some of the difficulties encountered by the RCMP in Quebec, lead one to the inescapable conclusion that organized crime has put great pressure even on governments, even on our law enforcement agencies. Have we heard any worth-while explanation from the minister regarding the activities of Mr. Samson, the RCMP officer in Montreal who was involved in the July 26 bombing of one of the directors of Steinberg's?

Mr. Allmand: Ask questions and I will do my best to answer them.

Mr. Lawrence: Injured in the attempt, he is reputed to have been in contact both with Camille Gervais and William Obrunt. Gervais is awaiting sentence for conspiracy, while Obrunt has been designated by police as an underworld banker. Obrunt has been missing at least since October 16, 1974, and still does not seem to have been located. This leaves us with two questions: where is Obrunt now, and what does the government intend to do to find him and to prosecute him? I say that the Samson affair ties in with another alleged link to organized crime. RCMP officers McLery and Brunet were fired from the force in December, 1973, apparently due to their association—with whom? With Mr. Obrunt. They attempted to have their case reviewed but ran into difficulty when told that all relevant facts would be made public. They then decided not to have their case reviewed. I do not know where the pressure for that came from, whether it came from the underworld or from the RCMP; but no matter where the pressure came from, the circumstances look suspicious and the government owes us an explanation. All three of these men were involved with intelligence and with security.

On October 24, only eight days after they gave evidence that Samson was somehow connected with the underworld, it was announced that the FBI and the CIA had been asked to aid with security for the Olympic Games. The timing is too obvious to be ignored. The hypothesis is that by infiltrating the RCMP, organized crime was able to get hold of the security plans for the Olympics. Obvi-

[Mr. Lawrence.]

ously, these plans would be sold to the highest terrorist bidders in the world.

I will not deal with the computation of crimes: we can deal with that another day. Let me say that I echo the sentiments which have been expressed in this debate. Our aim in this country should be to increase the deterrent to crime by increasing the chance of detection. We do not necessarily need to increase the length of jail terms or their severity. I completely agree with the thrust of the speech made by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe. We need more work, more leadership, more initiative to be shown by the government in combating crime and its causes. If we can do that best by establishing a royal commission, we should establish that royal commission. The minister suggested that royal commissions, according to police experts, are not the best way of assisting the police. A royal commission might not assist the police, but it would wake up a lethargic and apathetic government and demonstrate the existence of difficulties in this area.

I suggest that we need more co-operation and communication among federal, provincial and local police forces; that we need improved co-operation and communication among federal and provincial departments of justice, prosecutors and officials. For heaven's sake, the provincial Crown Attorney system is there; why duplicate it at the federal level by establishing a new list of federal Crown Attorneys? The police need to concentrate on serious crimes involving victims, and we must investigate the feasibility of removing from the Criminal Code crimes which do not involve victims; crimes such as gambling, prostitution, liquor offences, and so on. Further, RCMP law enforcement officers are too important to be wasted. They should be given better training, and their time should not be wasted in patrolling Ottawa's NCC roads and handing out tickets for driving offences. They should be the experts trained to combat crime. Today, that is simply not the case.

One could make many suggestions. Most of all, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, and the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) must be aware of what is going on today. They must demonstrate their inherent desire to come to grips with the problem. That, sir, we have not seen.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question. Actually, I could ask about 30 or 40 questions, but will be content with one. At the beginning of his remarks he said that the system in Canada, under which criminal jurisdiction is divided between the provinces and the federal government, is wrong, is scandalous. Was he seriously suggesting that the constitution should be amended, or that the federal government should ignore the constitution and take away from the provinces their jurisdiction in the criminal justice field and, as well, their responsibility in enforcing the Criminal Code? In other words, was he suggesting that the federal government should take over from the provinces the enforcement and prosecution of offences under the Criminal Code?

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I am no lover of the British North America Act and I think it is scandalous that we, in this country, are still labouring under an inadequate constitution. For that I blame my hon. friend and his govern-