

Organized Crime

nearly the entire amount, which meant that he had once again to pay notary fees and insurance premiums. He realized that he was not better off after three years than at the time he took out his loan and that he would probably have to repay this debt all his life, and in addition, that, on his death, his succession would have to continue paying the finance company.

Mr. Speaker, usurious loans are those we must fight against with laws, but with laws that are enforced, of course, and not put on the shelves and forgotten. We must enforce them. Whatever the names of the chairmen of those finance companies might be, they must be put in prison like others when they violate the legislation made by governments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a type of usurious loan from which especially the poor must suffer. This is an important point we must also consider.

I come now to organized crime, to crime in general. We know that in the last few years the Canadian government, along with governments in the United States and in other countries, has felt pity for criminals to the extent that they have abolished the death penalty. They have made release on parole or on bail easier. They have even made it easier for prisoners to escape. It is now easier to get out of prison than to get in.

● (1620)

Now, Mr. Speaker, given those facts, we notice a sharp increase in the rate of crimes of all kinds in Canada as well as in the United States or elsewhere. Unfortunately, I was unable to find recent statistics on the crime upsurge in Canada, but I have here an article by Elmer Von Feldt and published in the November 1974 issue of *Columbia* magazine, and I quote:

The real evil of the American society, that keeps pace with the inflation calamity is violent crime. It has shot up by 47 per cent during these last five years.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, one can easily conclude that the situation is about the same in Canada. It is true that we have a serious problem on account of inflation but the crime problem in Canada is no less serious. The situation south of our border is about the same as the one we have here.

Further Mr. Feldt provides statistics on the kinds of violent crimes committed in the United States:

Such statistics that make one ponder still give more weight to the recent warning sounded by Attorney General William B. Saxbe that this nation should begin to keep a closer watch on the criminal. He gave striking advice to the chiefs of police of 27 great cities attending a meeting in Chicago last August.

And the Attorney General of the United States insists on the following:

"The tendency on the part of certain people always to blame the crime but never the criminal should be revised once more . . .

"There was a time when most people looked upon the criminal as an abject person. Today, the criminal is more and more considered as a hero—not only in arts but on street corners also.

"Those who kill, who rape and who rob are often considered as political victims.

"Certain crimes—perhaps many crimes—will not be cured merely through the elimination of conditions that many people finally accepted as the deep causes of illegal behaviour.

[Mr. Laprise.]

"Many criminals transgress the law because they do want to. When dealing with them, the first thing to do is to increase our chances against them. We must make criminal conduct much more risky. We must ensure that chances are with society; that, when somebody commits a crime, he will be caught; once caught, he will have to face a fast and unfallible justice; when condemned, he will go to prison."

I, for one, would like to add: he will have to stay in prison.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order. I must interrupt the hon. member because the time allocated to him has expired. Unless he obtains the unanimous consent of the House, he may not be allowed to go on with his remarks.

Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to complete his speech?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Laprise: I thank the House for allowing me to conclude my observations. I would have many other things to say on this subject, but others will have the opportunity to express their views. I would like to end with the motion moved by the mover, this afternoon, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, asking that a royal commission be instituted to find out the causes of organized crime.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member for Saint-Hyacinthe is serious about it. I hope he is. I know he has wide experience in this field since he has been a lawyer, a judge, a minister, and a judge again. I think he is one of those who best know the problems of organized crime, not only from the criminal's, but also from the victim's point of view.

For years, we have had royal commissions in Quebec, and in Canada too, not particularly on organized crime, but on other problems. Two kinds of inquiries are now being conducted in Quebec, one on crime in general and the other on the problems of building trades which, strangely enough, have some similitude with organized crime.

Several years ago, an inquiry was conducted by Mayor Drapeau of Montreal in cooperation with Mr. Pacifique Plante. What was the net result? Not very much! Another inquiry was launched a couple of years ago, I believe. What further result did it produce? Nothing much! We now have yet another inquiry. We find that crime exists, it is obvious, but what is being done against the criminal?

We have often seen hardened criminals apprehended after committing a loathsome crime. Police officers have risked their life to apprehend these criminals, the latter are put in prison and a few days later, they are back on the streets, as free men, making faces at the police officers that had arrested them.

One wonders if it is worthwhile risking the life of police officers to arrest loathsome individuals when it is known that a few days later they will be as free as wind and will continue committing more crimes. It is well known that some individuals are now free after buying their evasion way out and they are endangering everyone's life.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier and as others have pointed out, I think that we should pay more attention to criminals than to crimes.