

*Criminal Code*

and other programs. As recently as January 18, 1978, four federal ministers in conjunction with ministers from British Columbia established a federal-provincial strategy committee to co-ordinate a program to deal more effectively with heroin abuses and illicit drug trafficking in British Columbia. I do not wish to imply that the interests of these ministers were restricted to one area of the country. The meeting in January was held to discuss recommendations by a special federal-provincial committee set up early in 1977 to develop a plan of attack on the serious heroin problem in Canada as a whole.

The first of the recommendations agreed to at the meeting in January called for "a balanced approach of supply and demand reduction, that is, cutting the availability of heroin on the street while at the same time reducing the number of addicts." This, I suggest, is the central aspect of hard drug addiction. I have noted, Mr. Speaker, that the number of known addicts is increasing year by year. At the same time, the amount of heroin seized by the RCMP is declining year by year. The facts of those seizures are as follows: in 1969-1970, 37.9 pounds; in 1970-71, 58.4 pounds; in 1971-72, 195 pounds; in 1972-73, 165.1 pounds; in 1973-74, 77.8 pounds; in 1974-75, 30.5 pounds; in 1975-76, 36.3 pounds; and in 1976-77, 17.6 pounds. Against these seizures, the estimated annual consumption of heroin in British Columbia alone is 365 pounds per year.

● (2012)

There is, I think, Mr. Speaker, a certain inevitability in the conclusion which must be drawn from the statistics I have just given. The numbers of known addicts, especially heroin addicts, is increasing while the amount of heroin seized is decreasing. Despite the efforts of law enforcement officials to seal off avenues of entry for narcotics, they are still getting into the country. I suggest that one way, possibly the major way, in which our growing addict population is being serviced is through that open conduit of the mails.

All members will recall, I believe, public statements by the commissioner of the RCMP on how this system works.

[*Translation*]

For instance, in Bangkok, Thailand, one gram of 100 per cent pure heroin sells for \$4 to \$6. This quantity is then sent by first class mail to Canada. When he receives that gram of heroin, the trafficker adds to it a substance like lactose to make 16 grams. So, from one gram he gets 16 grams that contain about 5 per cent heroin, and that is the quality of heroin presently sold in Canada. Those 16 grams are then used to make 228 capsules that sells for about \$50 apiece in Canada. So you realize by a simple calculation that the initial \$4 to \$6 investment yields a profit of about \$11,400 for the trafficker. One pound of heroin would yield almost a quarter of a million dollars. This represents for the potential trafficker a very profitable business that can be conducted through the mail. The heroin market, which represents some \$225 million a year, is the fifth largest industry in British Columbia at

[Mr. Blais.]

present, coming behind forestry, mining, tourism and farming. You can realize how serious is this problem.

In British Columbia, one pound of heroin is worth almost \$1 million because of the demand. At the national level, the price and market value of heroin are twice as much.

[*English*]

As to the incidence of such use of the mails, the commissioner also informed the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of one case involving approximately 100 first class mail envelopes containing heroin. But the full extent of the use of the mails to transmit drugs undoubtedly goes well beyond that particular incident. The mails are being used, among other means, to service a growing addict population in Canada. This mails conduit is mostly from offshore, and I believe we have an obligation to stop it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-26 would not only authorize the opening of first class mail related to the drug trafficking I just mentioned, but it also would grant similar authority as concerns national security matters.

[*English*]

In regard to national security, I think it is worth repeating an observation made by the Mackenzie Royal Commission on Security in 1969. Those commissioners noted that the state has a responsibility:

To protect its secrets from espionage, its information from unauthorized disclosure, its institutions from subversion and its policies from clandestine influence—

The Commission's report went on:

There has been no period in history when attempts at activities of these kinds have not been undertaken. Such attempts—successful or unsuccessful—are taking place now and will undoubtedly continue to take place in one form or another as long as international relationships are based on the existence of nation states. In order to carry out its responsibilities, the state must make arrangements to determine the nature and extent of activities of this kind which exist at any given time, and to take such preventative or defensive measures as may be possible and appropriate.

The provisions of the bill relating to national security concerns are intended to provide such preventive or defensive measures. No one would suggest that the proposed measures themselves are an absolute requirement for the protection of our sovereignty, not any more than those measures relating to drugs are going to solve the whole drug problem in Canada. But they are important in accomplishing these ends.

Canada, and I have said this often, has the most secure civil liberties of any nation in the world. The reason for this is largely that Canadians have been vigilant in their protection. The 11 jurisdictions in Canada, including the provinces and the federal government, have given the issue of civil liberties within their own jurisdictions their attention and the healthy competition between them has incited each to adopt measures that have promoted those liberties. There is a recognition as well that our adoption of British parliamentary institutions as models for our own democratic process gave us a head start.

But those civil liberties will only remain as long as our sovereignty is maintained, as long as those institutions are