

read into the record. It is a sad type of letter, but I did check it out and I think I should read it because it is very important, particularly if we are to talk about one of the things that I consider important, that is, what happens to the victims of crime. I am very saddened that even before we got into this debate the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) did not introduce something to this House which would tell us what he and his government plan to do for victims of crime. With the type of easy-going attitude which this government has adopted in respect of law and order, I think we are going to see an increase in crime in this country. I am sure we will see that increase in the next few years. What is this government going to do for the victims of crime?

Let me read the House this letter to show what can happen to families as a result of these tragic happenings that occur from time to time. It reads:

Dear John Reynolds:

I am 15 years, and cannot wait to be 18 years old so that I will be able to vote, (that is if I make it to that age). And when, and if I ever get a chance I will make sure the person who I vote for is a retentionist like you. And many of my friends intend to do the same. When we are teenagers, people ignore our opinions, but soon we will be the future voters. You see, sir, since last year our whole family's life has changed. My mother has been in the hospital, under psychiatric care. She is out of the hospital now, but still has to take many pills. She cries all the time, and sleeps with a knife under her pillow; she also bought a gun, just in case someone breaks in. My twin sister and I are afraid to go to the store alone, or even to the bank. It is terrible to be afraid, but our family has a good reason to be, because last year my 16 year-old sister, Sharron, went to the store and never came back. She was kidnapped, raped and murdered. And that was at 7 p.m. on a Saturday. I was taught to love and trust, but now I trust no one, not even the government.

Doreen Prior.

It is in cases like this about which the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway has expressed the fear that some of these sick individuals are getting out of prison and doing it again. In one case that she mentioned this did occur, and there have been a number of others. For that reason alone, I think capital punishment has a place in our society at this time. For this reason I emphasize the question as to what the Solicitor General and his government intend to do to protect the victims of crime. Certainly, these people are not being protected at all at this time, yet the persons who are guilty of such crimes under the law that has been in force could be out again in seven years and back on the streets with very little to worry about. I do not think these other people will ever again lead normal lives.

Let me also ask the Solicitor General about the intended review of our penal system. When is he going to put a program before us that will solve the problems that occur in places like the British Columbia penitentiary and Millhaven? We have not seen that program, yet we are being asked to abolish capital punishment. When is the Solicitor General going to bring before this House a program in respect of juvenile crime? The Solicitor General might well say that he does have a book out called "Youth in Conflict with the Law" that is being discussed across the country. That is true, but why can this program not be considered as quickly as the measure to abolish capital punishment? I do not think the priorities of the Solicitor General's department are appropriate.

One of the major problems in this country is associated with juvenile crime. Certainly, in my own area we have

Capital Punishment

taken an active part, with the Solicitor General's department, in respect of this specific problem. I have attended a number of meetings of interested parties. In fact, we are now having meetings on a bi-weekly basis. These meetings are attended by my constituency secretary when I am unable to attend. The people in the area are trying to come up with solutions to the problem of the juvenile crime rate there. I must admit that there is no money available, but the people and the programs are available to solve the problem. Yet here we are abolishing capital punishment, spending a lot of time in this House on the one thing that would probably result in a very small number of people being put to death over the years.

I think the Solicitor General owes it to the country, before this vote is taken on Wednesday, to take some time to come up with his priorities, to tell us what he intends to do in respect of penitentiaries in this country, and to solve the juvenile problem across the land. None of us expects a utopia, and we know the Solicitor General is unable to solve all the problems; but we would certainly like to see a blueprint of a plan the Solicitor General might possibly have to cut down on the number of problems that lead to the existence of some of these vicious people about whom we are talking.

I would like to finish by talking for a minute or two about the vote to be taken on Wednesday. I hope all members of this House will be here for this vote. I know a lot of people are saying that the whole issue has been decided and maybe they should not come back. We heard that from a number of sources over the weekend. Let me point out the closeness of the vote on second reading and the fact that since then we know the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) has indicated he is switching his vote. The hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday) also indicated on the weekend that he is switching his vote. If you add to that the two gentlemen who are retentionists who could not make it for the last vote due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the airline strike, the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) and the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), that brings us to within two votes.

In view of rumours that others in the House intend to switch their vote, I hope every member will see fit to be here to exercise the responsibility of voting on Wednesday, because I would not like to see an issue that is so close, an issue that has so divided this country—for which we must blame the government—won or lost by one or two votes, with one or two members not present in the House.

Mr. J. Larry Condon (Middlesex-London-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, we are now getting down to the time when we will finally have to make a decision on this very important issue. My great concern—and I will be very brief—is for the feelings of the people in the riding of Middlesex-London-Lambton and, I believe, of the people throughout Canada. I had a very disturbing phone call this morning from one of the teachers in our local high school. She said, "Larry, I took a poll of our grade 13 class with regard to capital punishment, and I am afraid it is going to be quite a shock when you find out exactly what the consensus is, and the percentage." I asked her to tell me, because I felt that perhaps some small pocket in my riding would agree with the abolitionists. She said, "Larry, 90 per