

any kind of decent work. That fact in itself is an indictment of our whole system. What is the man to do? I wish to say now unequivocally—there are many Canadians who do not recognize this principle, but it is a principle and a basic fact—that the majority of persons who are sent to jail are handicapped persons. There are other types of handicapped than those who happen to be blind, deaf or mentally retarded. The majority of those who go to jail do so because they are handicapped in other ways. It is the responsibility of the society which puts them in jail to undertake rehabilitation while they are there, and that is not now being done in Canada.

● (1550)

Certainly, when he comes out of jail, the state should not lose interest in or concern for that individual, otherwise the problem will be compounded. He will be back in jail again, and in the interim he may have done immeasurable damage to property and perhaps life. It is the responsibility of the state to rehabilitate those unfortunates after they come out of jail. I want to state now, as a profound conviction, that for any person who is released following incarceration in jail the state should bear the responsibility of providing meaningful employment.

I have spoken of rehabilitation in jail. This is really a contradiction in terms, because if there is one fact that should now be clear to all it is that rehabilitation or reform cannot be accomplished in the all-corruptive environment of custody as we know it. I would interject a question at this point: What is the explanation for the fact that at this moment—I am told this by penologists—we have a larger number of our citizens in jail than does any other country in Western society? That surely indicates something. Reform or rehabilitation can only take place, in my view, in the community at large. Society has a responsibility to support persons released from jail, and to assist in undoing the damage caused while in custody, which should never have taken place in the first instance.

I say again that the Criminal Code should be overhauled to remove from it what we call, for want of a better word, non-victim crimes. I could speak for some time on that subject. Surely, in this day and age, common sense and the lessons of history indicate that the time has come for us to remove from our midst this relic of our puritanical past. Many people are in jail not because they have injured anyone, but because they have offended our sense of morality.

Another social problem about which little has been done in recent years—and this may surprise honourable senators—lies in the field of child welfare. Increasingly we have come to recognize that most problem adults, whether young adults of 19 or 20 years of age or recidivists of 40 years of age, are the innocent victims of neglect and abuse in early life. What is most frightening—and apparently this is only now being recognized by society as a whole, although it has been long known by those working in the field of social welfare—is the number of helpless children in this civilized country of Canada, many of whom are infants of a few days, a few weeks or a few months, who are physically battered and abused by either their parents or other adults. This is something about which practically nothing has been done in our enlightened society.

[Hon. Mr. Rowe.]

The latest statistics, which came out a week or two ago, indicate that there are hundreds of such cases in every province and, in Canada as a whole, the number is in the thousands. In actuality, every year in Canada—this is not my estimate; it is the estimate of those who have made a study in this field—several hundred children die directly or indirectly as a result of the battering administered to them by sadistic or perverted adults. Often it is administered by parents, many of whom—I say this as one who has enjoyed the use of alcohol from time to time—are under the influence of alcohol. Honourable senators, we should think of this the next time an 18 year-old girl is put in jail for smoking a marijuana cigarette, or a 16 year-old boy is put in jail for trading a few marijuana cigarettes with his chums.

This problem is tied in with our attitude in other areas. Instead of training our police to be more efficient and competent in dealing with such social evils—I am not attaching any blame to the police; they are as much victims of this process as are some of the unfortunate people I have been speaking about—instead of encouraging our police to work in close association with medical and other welfare authorities with a view to making an intelligent and scientific frontal attack on the evil of child abuse, we encourage them to dissipate their energies and resources in utterly meaningless and stupid activities such as keeping a close eye on the so-called massage parlours of Toronto, Montreal, and perhaps Ottawa, and in scrutinizing newsstands with a view to catching some of the publishers and distributors of girlie magazines.

All this is done in defiance, for example, of the findings of the presidential commission set up in the United States a few years ago on obscenity and pornography, in defiance of the great bulk of psychiatric evidence available on obscenity and pornography, and in defiance of the experience of the Scandinavian countries and other enlightened and civilized countries of Europe. We continue to dissipate our money and our resources in that ridiculous way.

Another major problem with which we have made some progress, but which is still prevalent—so prevalent, in fact, as to negate some of the assumptions of democracy—is the lack of educational opportunity for so many Canadian children. I know that the program to remove regional disparity has met with considerable success. I have seen this happen in my own province. I was part of a team which implemented such a program in Newfoundland, and I know what is being done. But it is a long-term program, and an attack on the lack of educational opportunity for our children should not have to wait for the major program of regional disparity to be implemented. It should not be outside the wit and resources of Canada to devise formulae and programs such as those in several communist countries—and I hasten to add that I am not a communist—whereby every child in Canada—and when I say “every child,” I mean precisely that—will have the opportunity to realize his educational potential.

Equal in magnitude is the problem of the aged. More and more of our people are living longer, and more and more they are being encouraged, and indeed forced, to retire at a relatively early age. It was one thing for a man to retire at the age of 60 or 65 when, as was the case in my father's day, the average span of life was 50 years. But it is another