

Organized Crime

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The minister may wish to ask a question, and by allowing the hon. member to answer we would be extending his time in this debate. That could only be done by unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy of the House and I do not want to trespass any more than I have to, but may I get on to one other subject—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I believe there has been a misunderstanding. The minister rose to ask a question and the Chair put to the House the question whether the hon. member could be given additional time to answer. I think that is what was requested and there is agreement to it.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I either have extra time to continue, or I do not. If I have extra time to continue, I should like to use it in another way, and I will certainly entertain the minister's question.

An hon. Member: Let him ask the question.

Mr. Lawrence: If I may continue, and I assume I may—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but he has not been given time to continue. The request was for a question, and if the minister wishes to put that question now, the House has consented to allow the hon. member time to answer.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise a point of order. The last speaker who had difficulty ending his speech within the time requested extra time, and you were kind enough to follow the usual custom and ask the House whether he could have it, and consent was given. With respect, what you are saying now is that the only question is whether the minister ought to be able to question the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). Bearing in mind the undertaking which the hon. member has given to take a question from the minister, may I ask, on his behalf, that you put the usual question whether he can have time to finish his speech?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. The Chair has ruled in this regard, that it should be at the end of the hon. member's speech. He did not request additional time. The Chair put the question to the House when the minister asked to put a question to the hon. member. That is the situation. If the hon. member wishes to request an extension of time, he may certainly do so and that question will be put to the House.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I thought I did request it. I thought you put the question and I thought the answer was in the affirmative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it agreed that the hon. member shall have additional time to complete his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lawrence: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the courtesy of the House and I hope I shall not trespass unduly. There are a number of subjects that one would want to get into in a wide-ranging debate such as this, but I want to deal with two, if I may. One is the question of whether organized crime has infiltrated the very ranks of government itself. I should like to bring to the attention of the House the case of Mr. Charles Spatero who at one time was from Buffalo, New York. Dilly, as he is known to his friends, is what is known in the trade as a "torch". A torch is a gentleman who specializes in incendiary and arson work in Toronto, Montreal and some of our larger areas.

For the last little while there has been an alarming outbreak of arson. It is connected, obviously, with loan sharking, obviously with protection rackets and obviously with the enforcement of underworld regulations and judgments. They do exist, Mr. Speaker. I should like to suggest to you that so far in this session, in any event, I have heard no explanation whatsoever from the government or the minister as to the rather novel and alarming series of events that have overtaken Mr. Charles Angelo Spatero. He was sentenced in 1970 to the maximum sentence for arson in this country, 14 years, by Judge Martin in Toronto. On June 15, while incarcerated in Warkworth prison—which is just outside the boundaries of my riding—Mr. Spatero managed to obtain a three-day pass in order to see his wife who was supposed to be in a motel nearby.

Here is a man who received the maximum sentence on a charge of arson, Mr. Speaker. The evidence at the trial clearly indicated that he was not just on trial for one charge, but in actual fact there were five different related charges of arson. The one they got Dilly on was for pouring alcohol and gasoline all through a crowded tavern in downtown Toronto. In any event, he got 14 years. Somehow, somewhere, a man with that record got a three-day weekend pass on June 15. I do not find that remarkable because there are many other instances of people such as that getting weekend passes today. This is a novel technique that was brought about by the Trudeau government in this country. I am not so sure it has been a success, but that is not the point I am worried about today.

On June 15, on that weekend pass, of course, Dilly Spatero never returned to the Warkworth prison. Before long it was obvious that he had got into a green Cadillac—registered to a known underworld figure in New York state—in Campbellford which is just a few miles away from the prison, and obviously he was across the border in a matter of hours. That was known to law enforcement agencies in New York state, to law enforcement agencies in Canada; and it was known, as well, by the newspapers. Actually, on October 23 the reporters of two Toronto newspapers interviewed Mr. Spatero in Buffalo, New York. The point is that he was an escaped arsonist, a dangerous man. That was even the opinion of the late Mr. Maggadino, the crime boss in Buffalo who controlled certain kinds of crime in Hamilton and Toronto. Mr. Maggadino is no longer alive, but his organization is still alive. This man, Spatero, is a recognized torch. He should not have been out on weekend leave. He was out, and he got away. There has been an unaccountable delay in serving extradition papers in respect of Mr. Spatero.