

*Supply—Justice*

not think I would be doing for a few years under any circumstances, and that is commending the hon. member for Villeneuve. He hit several nails firmly on the head tonight and I congratulate him. He is becoming a very perceptive spokesman for his part of the country, and a very perceptive person in reference to the whole of the country. He is quite right in suggesting you do not have to be a regional barrel thumper to be a good representative of any particular region.

● (9:40 p.m.)

I share too with the hon. member a feeling of unhappiness, or worse, about the question of capital punishment. I am not one of those so dedicated as being incapable of changing his mind on a question so important and so difficult of solution, while so far removed from certitude as this question. But I do resent very much any device by which members of parliament, no election having intervened, can be presented a second time with a similar question, the implication being that since a government measure is concerned, our disposition with regard to the subject might somehow be altered. I take this as a reflection upon our integrity. Indeed, to suggest that we are free agents when we vote, that we are simply seeking the best solution to the question before us, is not greatly conducive to the acceptance of the idea. All this disturbs me, and I quite agree with the hon. member for Villeneuve. I should have thought that in these critical and crucial times a better way might have been found when dealing with this very important question.

I wish there was an opportunity to discuss many other matters. Some of them have been touched upon by the hon. member for Greenwood who, I notice, is becoming quite a linguist. Some have been discussed by my hon. friend from Edmonton-Strathcona. The whole question of the laws in our society, and the judiciary as an institution, is one to which we should apply ourselves. The judicial institution in our free society is one of the great forces working for stability, and indeed, as a God-fearing Presbyterian, I might say, for enforced righteousness. But perhaps at times stability may seem to the body politic to be excessive conservatism with a small "c", and perhaps in a society, which is seemingly a very permissive one but also a restless and troubled one, the role of the judiciary and the courts is one upon which we should direct a little more thought.

As a layman in the field of law I am sometimes concerned about the variety of

sentencing. I am speaking here in an academic and abstract sense, but when I see a bright young man who stole a boat being sentenced to four years in penitentiary, and another man, bright or otherwise, who ended the life of a couple of his fellow citizens, getting three years, I wonder. Sometimes I feel that there is often too great a regard for property and that the offence against property seems to be more heinous than the offence against life. Sometimes I wonder if in our present society we are concerned, as we certainly should be, about the life, the future and the prospects of rehabilitation for the offender and for the person who takes the life of his fellow man, but may be a little less than sensitive about his victims. In this field the hon. member for York-Humber, with whom I disagree on several things I may say, has shown some initiative and some sensitivity.

I wonder also if we are not at the stage where we should be giving some careful thought to and preparation in the whole realm of labour relations. I know that the history of labour courts in many parts of the world has been uncertain. There have been some great successes and some failures. But, as I have looked over the activities, the episodes, the incidents and the anxieties in the labour sector of society, I wonder if we should not be giving more thought to the judicial and institutional aspects in dealing with this important problem.

There are other fields which cause me great concern. As one who used to be involved in the field of sociology I am appalled at the great need for more adequately trained personnel in our corrective institutions. I often wonder about those who believe that the worst punishment that should be inflicted on anyone is life imprisonment, and are so disinterested in the establishment of adequate facilities in which to maintain these erring citizens. It is a long time since we looked in depth into our corrective institutions. We have passed the age of merely making a punishment fit the crime.

We have passed the retributive stage. But as I look at our institutions and as I hear stories of what happens in some of them, I wonder if in fact our preachments are not far beyond our practices. In this age, when we are looking again at our constitution, we should be looking at our role in the international scene and perhaps we should be doing some fundamental thinking in some of these areas.