

country of many of us here, Great Britain, during World War II. May I say at this point that while I recognize the many defects, faults and shortcomings of the British people, and the grave injustices that they have at times perpetrated—as a student of history I would be very naive and dense were I not to recognize that those things have happened—nevertheless, I wish to say with equal emphasis, and without any tinge of racialism, that I have always been proud of my British ancestry. I was especially proud, of course, as were all other Canadians, and for that matter all other people in the free world, during those years when the only thing standing between a madman and world domination was the character of the British people. I was very proud of that. But the time that I felt proudest was not at the time of Dunkirk; it was not when the British people stood up under the might of the Luftwaffe; and it was not when the British people coped with the Battle of the Atlantic, with which we in Newfoundland were so intimately associated. My proudest moment came at a time when the fortunes of the British people were at their lowest ebb, when everyone was predicting the imminent defeat and collapse of Britain, and when the government, with the complete approval of the people of Britain, decided that the time was appropriate to set up a commission to study elementary and high school education so that the educational welfare of the children of Britain could be provided for in the years to come.

● (1540)

To interject a personal note, I was in the Canadian Officers' Training Corps at the time and I remember this announcement coincided with a very great reverse in Britain's fortunes—another one of those reverses. I remember an officer in our corps saying to me privately that this reverse only confirmed what in his opinion he all knew at the bottom of our hearts, that Britain was about to collapse and Germany would take over. I remember that my retort to him—and I do not say this boastfully but as a matter of fact—was that any people who at such a time could be concerning themselves with the future education of their children could not be permanently subdued. History showed, of course, that that conviction was correct.

I have used an extreme case deliberately as an example to illustrate the fact that while we are not faced, of course, with a crisis of the magnitude of that which Britain faced back in the early days of World War II, we are faced with other crises and there is the danger that we can lose our sense of proportion. I wish to state here—and I am not thinking only of the federal government and Parliament, but of all levels of government and our society generally—that I have felt in the last three or four years that because of our struggle with those great problems to which I have just referred of unemployment, inflation and so on, we are not doing what we should be doing about a multitude of other problems confronting us. This is a pity for, apart from the inherent danger that this neglect holds for us, we are by our sins of omission sully a proud record in social achievement which for a time put Canada in the forefront as a world leader in social welfare matched only, perhaps, by a handful—maybe only two or three—of the smaller nations of the world. I think we have lost that pre-eminent position.

I shall not spell out in detail the nature or the magnitude of the problems that I think we are at this moment guilty of neglecting and with which we must cope if we are to recover that pre-eminent position, or even if we are to hold our own and not slip back further, but I will refer to a number of them although not in any order of priority.

First, there is the matter of our criminal laws—the Criminal Code, if you wish—allied with which is our penal system. In case I may be misunderstood in this connection, allow me to say that some people must be incarcerated in order to protect society, but they should not be incarcerated as an act of vengeance. Any incarceration, or any conviction resulting in a penalty, should carry with it the obligation on society to rehabilitate where necessary and when possible.

The study recently concluded—I believe only last week; at least that was the first time I read the conclusions of the Centre of Criminology of my old alma mater, the University of Toronto—has just confirmed something which I and others, including Senator Hastings, have stated before in this chamber. Most of those in jail in Canada at this moment should not be there. Putting a person in jail under our present system merely aggravates the problem for the rest of us. It does nothing to solve the problem, but makes the problem greater in the long run, apart from the obvious fact that any lengthy period of incarceration usually in turn makes the inmate a better criminal—not better in a moral sense, but a better and more accomplished criminal. This is apart from the fact that it usually makes him more hostile to society than when he was committed to jail. The fact is that we are really compounding the factors which led to his antisocial behaviour in the first place. We do not rehabilitate, and we do not make it possible for any of the unfortunates concerned to rehabilitate themselves. Witness the difficulty, for example—

Hon. Mr. Walker: Would the honourable senator permit a question?

Hon. Mr. Rowe: Certainly.

Hon. Mr. Walker: Would he tell us what he would do instead of putting them in jail? For instance, Rose was freed recently. What would you propose as a substitute for imprisonment?

Hon. Mr. Rowe: I appreciate the idea behind the honourable senator's question. I think I answered it partly at the beginning of this part of my speech when I said I recognized, and would be foolish not to recognize, the fact that society must be protected. Things being as they are, some people must be put away. We cannot have criminal rapists at large, we cannot have people attacking little children and, for that matter, we cannot have people breaking into banks every second week.

I should like to have more time to deal with that question. I cannot deal with it in the time at my disposal now, which fact I am sure Senator Walker appreciates. This whole vast field of criminology is one, of course, that cannot be dealt with in detail in a speech such as this. We can only make bald statements of principle, which is what I am endeavouring to do now.

I was about to emphasize the fact that the average person leaving jail finds it next to impossible to obtain