

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

May I be allowed an aside, since I want to pay tribute to Mr. Jacques Bernier, a fellow-lawyer, a personal friend, and the former executive assistant of the federal Minister of National Health and Welfare, who was killed at Oka, last April, by a man who was driving while impaired, who had no driving license since it had been suspended following three serious automobile accidents which had happened in similar conditions, when he was drunk. I think that in the case of this man who took the life of Mr. Jacques Bernier, it is a criminal offence.

I want to put on record that Mr. Jacques Bernier, a young Quebecer, a bright mind and an undisputably talented man, spent more than a year of his short life working here in Ottawa, within the federal government, more especially under the present Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen).

During that short period, he proved eloquently that a young competent French Canadian, who does not suffer from the complex of the vanquished, can compel recognition in Ottawa and earn the respect and the admiration of all those for whom and with whom he works.

Mr. Jacques Bernier, 30 years old, is a highway victim. His wife and his young children are deprived of a beloved one. Our country has lost a young man with a brilliant future. He was about to be appointed assistant deputy minister in the Quebec Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Jacques Bernier enjoyed the friendship of businessmen as renowned as Messrs. Jean-Louis Lévesque and Paul Desmarais, of Quebec politicians as well-known as the Hon. Jean-Paul Beaudry and Mario Beaulieu, of Canadian politicians as important as the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Richardson).

With his talent, his love of work and the assistance of his friends, he could have had an enviable career in the world of business or in politics. He is a victim of a criminal act. The compensation that the government may decide on, will evidently not repair the damage caused.

I have given you this example to show how important it is to take care of the victims of criminal acts, so that even if the persons have passed away, their wife and children can receive an indemnity from society and continue to live in better conditions, that is better than if nothing had been provided for them in such circumstances.

[Mr. Ouellet.]

Mr. Jean-Charles Cantin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, you have already guessed that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) and myself have much sympathy, not only for the particular case of which the hon. member for Papineau spoke, but also for the principle outlined by him.

The department of Justice already knows that legislation exists, not only abroad, but even here in Canada, in some provinces to give compensation to victims. I shall refer to Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and even Quebec, where at the present time under a special legislation compensation is granted to the victims of hit-and-run drivers or criminal people.

But I will say more. The minister intends to go much further, for he wants the attorneys general of the provinces to deal with this very important problem, namely the compensation of the victims of criminal people.

Compensation means first of all civil damages and thus comes under provincial jurisdiction. That does not mean the Minister of Justice thinks that the federal government holds a certain responsibility as well, but only that the problem can be solved jointly with the provinces.

Then, at the next conferences with the provincial attorneys general, the Minister of Justice intends to put before them this very vital, essential and actual problem of the need to provide for this compensation, and also to refer it to the new committee on the uniformization of legislation in order to find a solution to it.

In the particular case now before us, I can say to the hon. member for Papineau that the minister and I have as much sympathy as he has for this victim and all the others.

[English]

AIR POLLUTION—COAL DUST FROM SHIPMENTS THROUGH VANCOUVER HARBOUR

Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour): Mr. Speaker, the other afternoon I directed a question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) regarding the matter of possible coal dust air pollution emanating from a projected expansion of Neptune Terminals on National Harbours Board property in the Burrard Inlet area of the lower mainland of British Columbia. I asked the minister to assure the house that coal dust pollution from this planned operation would not be tolerated.