

Organized Crime

The commissioners would empower police officers to bring any person who they have reasonable grounds to believe is an addict before a magistrate who would then decide whether the person should undergo a medical examination.

If the person was found to be drug-dependent by the examining physician, confirmed by another physician, he could then be committed to a residential treatment facility by them for up to three months.

The commissioners were quick to point out that "the goal would be to replace the initial compulsion as soon as possible by voluntary acceptance of and response to treatment".

That system has been used before. It was used in Japan. Ten years ago, Japan had 40,000 addicts; today they have 100. I know it is a different social climate and there are reasons for distinguishing the Japanese experience from our own, but I am urging the minister to let us try something. Even if it is a pilot project, let us try it and find out whether there is any merit in compulsory treatment. If we were to set up such a treatment centre on the lower mainland, I am sure the million people in the area would be delighted that some action was taking place and a new approach was being used. As I said, in Japan they have almost eliminated drug addiction with compulsory treatment. What they did is interesting. They finally cut off the trafficking routes to Japan, and they did it the hard way—by spending a lot of money, using a tremendous number of agents, and attacking the problem with the seriousness it deserves. That is what I suggest this government has failed to do. They have used the time-worn methods of controlling a disease which is growing and spiralling. We must take a new approach to the drug addiction problem. Incidentally, in the Japanese experiment there was rejection of the methadone treatment. I urge that we be very careful in the use of the methadone treatment because it has some very bad side-effects. I hope it will be rejected in any system that we adopt in this country. We also have the British experience. Britain, with a population of some 50 million people, has around 3,000 addicts. Canada, with a population of 20 million, in round figures, has around 15,000 addicts, conservatively. The British system tries to de-criminalize heroin trafficking. We must take the same route.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe dealt in some detail with the question of organized crime. Organized crime continues to feed in the consensual area. The Americans call it consensual crime. Where there is a market, organized crime will thrive. In a city where there are great discrepancies between rich and poor, organized crime has a heyday. One of the answers to this problem is to go some distance in removing these discrepancies within our cities. It is interesting that in a socially cohesive unit such as a small community, the crime rate is much lower. Social forces have tremendous influence on the whole community in reducing crime. But now we have various segments in our major urban centres which are at war with each other. There was the day when the police would grab a juvenile, take him to the old man and say, "If you don't do something to the kid, we will"—and it worked. Unfortunately, we are now so highly organized and overpopulated that this work is now being done by social workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired, unless there is unanimous agreement to allow him to continue. Is that agreed?

[Mr. Leggatt.]

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Leggatt: I would like to thank hon. members for their indulgence. I will be brief. Unless we attack the sources of crime and the social conditions which breed it, unless we attack the market for organized crime—that is, the condition which allows it to grow in such an insidious way—and unless we finally make up our minds to de-criminalize heroin addiction, and I do not mean get rid of trafficking because trafficking must remain a crime with the heavy penalties that it now has, the problem will get worse. But we are going down the road to destruction, in terms of the social cohesiveness of this country, if we do not finally attack this serious problem on a massive, national scale—and I mean with money, not gestures, Mr. Speaker.

● (1600)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like, on starting my remarks, to congratulate the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) for having moved the motion before the House today. I congratulate and thank him for giving us the opportunity of discussing this matter, of seeing things as they are, of putting them before the government and making the required suggestions to bring the government to adopt the means and take the steps required to fight against crime in all its forms in Canada.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, crime does not exist solely in Canada. Other countries face similar problems, but we must fight against crime here, at home, against crime in all its forms. I trust that in his motion, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe did not intend to situate the drug problem only in British Columbia, the loan shark business only in Ontario, and the mafia-type operations only in Quebec.

To my mind, those problems exist in all parts of Canada; the eastern provinces and the Maritimes are not exempt from them though crime may assume there less sophisticated forms than in the larger provinces such as Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, drugs are a very important problem because they attack the whole population, though especially our young people. We must deal with drug traffic profiteers; they above all others, Mr. Speaker, must be sought out. Not only do they pounce down on our high school students; they also have the gall to attack our students in primary school.

Mr. Speaker, in 1971 the government introduced a program to fight usage of drugs. This involved a four-point research program; collection, analysis, processing and publicizing of data. At the time, I blamed the government for doing nothing against the international and Canadian underworlds that make enormous profits by selling drugs to 12-, 13- or 14-year old secondary school students.

Mr. Speaker, the information program introduced in 1971 can have no other results than a somewhat better knowledge of the problem. But what has been done in the fight against it? Some people are arrested, drugs are seized. A few days ago, in my area, an operation was launched to try and discover drug peddlers. It resulted in