

The Address

heard the people speak. It is our duty to act upon that voice and begin working immediately to return the word justice to our country.

Only this morning in Question Period we heard that a sexual perpetrator of children has been released and is roaming the streets in British Columbia. He is a non-citizen. Why are we not rounding that individual up and getting him out of this country? We do not need him in Canada, nor do we need the likes of him. We could do it today, but it is my understanding that he has been released until February 16. What could happen between now and then?

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his passionate address with respect to a very important issue.

I have three brief questions that would perhaps help the discussion. He pointed out if my memory serves me correctly that 32 people have been killed by 23 individuals who had been paroled. As he indicated, even one death is one too many. Does he know how many overall have been paroled? In other words, these 23 parolees he speaks of are what percentage of all parolees? I do not know if he has that information.

There is another point I want to raise as a question. He indicated a need to improve the system. Of course all colleagues from all parties would agree that that is so. In fact, we made a commitment to do that in our electoral platform and it was repeated again in the speech from the throne.

Is he indicating that better appointments and better rules are necessary? I thought it was a suggestion that appointments would be the main ingredient there.

Finally, I had an independent study group of qualified individuals look at rates of crime in an attempt to see whether or not they correlated with capital punishment. In other words, in countries where there is capital punishment and in those where there is not, was there a correlation between rates of crime? It varied up and down. Sometimes it was yes and sometimes it was no.

I was wondering whether or not the hon. member had any credible studies which showed that if there were to be capital punishment in this country that all of a sudden violence—quite apart from the violence that the state of course would become involved in—would decrease.

• (1315)

Mr. Thompson: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his questions.

Regarding determining the percentage of people released from the penal system who kill again, we have just begun that process. It is a difficult thing to get our hands on. We have

identified who they are and so far our research shows that 32 people have died at their hands. As we continue I know that number will grow.

With regard to appointments, if we are going to have a parole board the last reason for appointment to a parole board should be that they were the good old boys or good old girls with some political party, doing political favours. Yet that seems to be the impression Canadians have. It certainly is the impression I have about some of them. I am not saying they are not qualified and cannot do the job. I am saying that there ought to be a better way of selecting these individuals and making certain that those who are appointed to that board know what they are doing.

The first thing we have to do is get an understanding that there is no such thing as automatic parole. Section 745 of the Criminal Code is one that must be repealed. Twenty-five years has to mean 25 years and 15 years has to mean 15 years.

On the issue of capital punishment, I am not sure what the stats are. I am saying that people out there are crying for justice. Let us give it to them and let them decide through a national binding referendum.

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant): Madam Speaker, just a short comment. Congratulations to the hon. member for Wild Rose, a marvellous name for a constituency and for a very impassioned speech.

I would like to point out that as we look through the total throne speech there are only very short references to all the important aspects this government will be focusing on.

We had the pleasure of having almost every single minister stand up in this House and broaden their perspective, including the Minister of Justice yesterday. I point that out to the member. If he did not hear it yesterday I hope the hon. member will read the speech by the hon. Minister of Justice, his lengthy dissertation on all his points of focus, many of which were mentioned in the hon. member's speech today.

Mr. Thompson: Madam Speaker, very briefly I do know of several members in the present government who feel exactly the way I do. I would be pleased to work alongside them.

I also know that we cannot continue to talk, talk, talk, rhetoric, rhetoric, rhetoric. Let us get to work. Let us get the job done now.

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to speak for the first time in this great Chamber and to congratulate you on your appointment to the Chair.

I would like to begin my remarks by thanking the people of St. John's West for their support on October 25. I am greatly honoured to serve as their member of Parliament and I look forward to working with my constituents over the next four years.