

*Measures Against Crime*

the legislation to provide for peace and security and to provide for protection against violent crime. This may be so, although I doubt it. But at the same time, sections of the Criminal Code will be wiped out which would better protect society if enforced than the sections which are to be introduced.

To begin with, the definition indicates that the new offences which can be prosecuted under the dangerous offenders part being introduced will be offences for which a person must be liable to imprisonment for five years or more. Thus, we see that the new standard is an offence of ten years' imprisonment, whereas the present standard is one of five years' imprisonment. Thus, on the face of it, it does not appear that the government is making prison sentences more severe for these so-called dangerous criminals, although it has announced that it is doing this as part of a great package on peace and security.

At the same time, the new proposals allow for the imprisonment of persons convicted of certain sex-related crimes, but are significantly weaker in this regard than the present law, in that one of the sex crimes covered by the present law which is applicable to dangerous sex offenders is dropped and applications for preventive detention for an indefinite period for attempts to commit certain sex offences are dropped. The present law covers the sex offences enumerated and any attempts to commit those offences. The new law proposed covers only sexual offences if they are committed, but does not cover the possibility of making application respecting persons who attempt to commit those offences but fail. Obviously, the present law is much stronger than the proposed law in this regard. Under the new proposed dangerous offenders section, it appears that the criminal is only a dangerous offender if he is successful in raping his victim, whereas if he is caught in the act and does not have time to complete it, or is unsuccessful in completing the rape and therefore has only attempted it, he becomes a non-dangerous offender. This is a ridiculous situation.

● (1610)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

**Mr. Dick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I do not wish to continue.

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-83, the crime prevention bill presented by my colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford). As Solicitor General, my prime goal and that of all the agencies working within the Ministry of the Solicitor General is to protect the public against crime, and especially violent crime. For this reason I support these measures, which were worked out in close co-operation between the Department of Justice and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, because all the measures included in the bill have been designed to further the goal of better protection for the public.

Furthermore, many of the specific items proposed in this bill will be implemented or administered by the Ministry of the Solicitor General. I refer especially to the amend-

[Mr. Dick.]

ments to the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to the regulative and administrative changes which will flow from those amendments, but also, of course, to the administrative duties which will devolve upon the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in carrying out the new firearms proposals and the new provisions regarding electronic surveillance.

Before dealing with three areas of special administrative concern to my department, I would like very briefly to sketch in some of the background against which the peace and security package was designed. As the Minister of Justice said in his speech moving second reading of Bill C-83, the concern of the federal government is to prevent and control crime, and especially violent and organized crime, here in Canada. The fundamental principle which must be kept in mind in assessing these measures is that the whole apparatus of criminal justice exists, first and foremost, to protect society against the effects of crime.

As I said before, while crime in Canada is not out of control, it is apparent that it is much easier to maintain control than it is to regain such control once lost. For this reason, the government is now offering to parliament the peace and security program, a series of measures to amend the criminal law and to improve the administration of criminal justice. These measures were proposed after lengthy consultations among federal officials and also with provincial governments whose responsibility for the administration of justice necessitates working in close co-operation with them.

I would now like to turn to the measures concerning firearms, corrections and electronic surveillance which bear specifically on my responsibilities as Solicitor General, and in the course of those remarks I would like to answer some of the concerns raised by hon. members in the initial stages of this debate. Some of the debate on the gun control measures appears to have missed the over-all intent of this new policy by misinterpreting some of the details.

Firearms have been, and continue to be, the instruments involved in frightening and tragic incidents in this country, such as occurred recently in Dresden and Calgary, not to mention the events in Vancouver, Brampton and Ottawa which are still so much in our minds. Many Canadians have expressed fear and concern that they might become victims of the senseless misuse of a firearm. People should not have to live with such concerns if we can do something about it, and I am convinced that we can. To reduce this concern we must reduce firearms incidents. To reduce firearms incidents we must reduce firearms availability—especially to those who can be identified as unfit, irresponsible, or dangerous.

Those who suggest that the answer to the firearms misuse problem in Canada lies in stiffer penalties against criminals alone have too restricted a view of the problem. Such penalties can help somewhat, of course, and to that extent new offences and higher maximum penalties have been provided for in the measures here proposed as outlined by my colleague, the Minister of Justice, at the opening of the debate. Yet it cannot be stated too often that few firearms murders are acts perpetrated by what we might call hardened or professional "criminals". Firearms murder is most often a domestic or acquaintance event