

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

travel throughout the country are so numerous and when accidents of that kind may well happen.

And if constitutional barriers exist, I think the government should at least try to call all provincial Ministers of Justice to a meeting, in an effort to make legislation uniform in the ten provinces.

I conclude with those few words, Mr. Speaker, because I do not want to fall into the bad habit that I have noticed since I have been here, that of wanting to kill private members' bills or notices of motions at all costs. On the contrary, I think that when they are as judicious as the one introduced by the hon. member for York-Humber, even those who are not close friends of his should forget the mover and say: He is right and we will support him. That is what I will do myself if I have the opportunity.

[*English*]

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I should like at the outset, speaking on behalf of the members of the New Democratic party, to support the principle set forth in the motion moved by the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan). In his speech, he mentioned the example of the widow in Scarborough whose husband had been murdered by a young 18 year old boy. I may tell him that the 18 year old boy was a constituent of mine. I think it should be said that this young boy came from a broken home and had very little family life. He had a previous criminal conviction, but he was making his way in society and was about to be married. He happened to be in Yorkville on the night in question. It was a very unfortunate incident. The altercation between him and the man who was murdered occurred, I understand, when the man was with a group of other men and also happened to be in the Yorkville area at the time.

My friend is quite correct when he says that at the moment we have different pieces of legislation in different provinces across the country covering this situation. Ultimately, this will result in a hodge-podge of different acts covering compensation to the innocent victims of crime. The first point the federal government appears to make is that this matter falls within provincial jurisdiction because the provinces have the duty to enforce the administration of justice. It seems to me the hon. member's point that the federal government has the right and duty to protect the citizens of Canada is a good one. The federal government should therefore

[*Mr. Mongrain.*]

have the full responsibility of compensating the innocent victims of criminal acts.

When I heard the different acts set forth by the minister as they apply in the different provinces, I realized the difficulty we are getting ourselves into with regard to compensating the victims of these criminal acts. There will not be the uniformity that is necessary to guarantee the people of Canada proper compensation for the acts that have been committed.

I note one part of the hon. member's motion reads:

—and wherever possible to do so, to impose payment of compensation by criminals to those they have injured.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that 18 months ago when I participated in the debate on the abolition of capital punishment I made this point in my speech, that it is not only proper to abolish capital punishment but there is also a duty imposed upon us to compensate the innocent victims of criminal acts. Of course, the best thing the government could do, in my opinion, would be to pass the abolition measure that is before the house now, then follow that up with a bill covering compensation to the victims of criminal acts. This is a very important thing. The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) suggested referring the subject matter to the standing committee on justice and legal affairs. As the hon. member for York-Humber stated, there is plenty of experience in other jurisdictions to enable us to implement a similar type act without the unnecessary delay of referring the subject to a committee. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we in this party support the motion and ask the government to take immediate action on it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Loibinière): Mr. Speaker, I had a private meeting earlier with the hon. member for Mercier (Mr. Boulanger). The hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) was there also. We discussed in detail the resolution which stands in the name of the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan).

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, perhaps especially following the comments of the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain), that I have often disagreed with the hon. member for York-Humber—I have sometimes called him a fanatic—who has on occasion behaved like a fanatic.

I heard him earlier use some rather violent expressions in speaking of certain members