

*The Address*

elected. A special thanks to my wife Dot for her faith and love during the campaign which remains with me today.

I am proud to be a Canadian by choice. When I arrived in Alberta 26 years ago along with my wife and my one-month-old boy I knew in a very short time that Canada was the place that I wanted to call home.

When I took my oath of citizenship in 1974, that was one of the highlights of my life. I never dreamed for a second at that time that I would have the honour to sit in this Chamber as a member of Parliament. However now that I am I pray that I might always speak the voice of some 45,000 that put me here.

Today I take pleasure in doing just that by addressing the topic of justice. As I recall and think about the values and the principles upon which this great country was founded, I have to ask myself what happened. Why is it today as we hear the voice of Canadians all across the country crying out for justice that their voices seem to be going unheard? Why is it when I walk to this place each day past the Department of Justice building that I feel the key word of justice has lost its meaning in this country? Justice appears to be in the minds of thousands of Canadians as a word that applies only to the rights and the protection of the criminal while the rights and the safety of law abiding potential victims goes completely unaddressed.

• (1305)

I believe that the government must immediately set its focus on the latter group. It should stop listening to the voices and the pressures of small interest groups crying out for criminals and refocus on the victims with a message that violence in this country will no longer be tolerated. People have the right to feel safe and be safe in this great country and we must aim for that goal.

The red book along with the throne speech alluded to the idea but I would suggest that it does not go nearly far enough in many areas. I admit I coughed once during the throne speech and may have missed something but I listened to about 10 or 15 seconds on justice.

I would like to offer some suggestions. Is it known that in the last five years 32 people have died in this country at the hands of 23 repeat offenders who were paroled from our penal system? This is the number that I know about. I really do not know what the true number is but that is how many I know about.

If we had a plane crash and 32 people died then this House would stand and mourn. If we had 32 people die on a bus or train collision then we would stand and mourn. When hear about 32 people dying at the hands of repeat killers we continue to do nothing. It is time to wake up and address this problem. If even one person had died from the hands of a repeat killer then as far as I am concerned that is one too many.

My suggestion based on the thousands of other comments from people would be to stop automatic parole. The frightening thing is that there will be approximately 80 more early parole hearings for first degree killers during the life of this 35th Parliament.

I quote from one of these repeat offenders: "The only thing crazier than me is the system that allowed me to kill again". This whole affair suggests to me that there is an element of incompetence that exists in our parole board, possibly through patronage appointments. Let us fix this incompetence problem and let us fix it now.

I have worked with young people for 30 years of my life, as a teacher, guidance counsellor and a junior high school principal. Since my election I have attended several meetings with parents, community members, school administrators to discuss what to do about the violence in schools.

Most of us here will remember the days of spitballs, getting out of line and chewing gum. These present day meetings are addressing drug abuse, rape, assault and murder. We have certainly come a long way. Yet when we have legislation such as the present Young Offenders Act there simply is no deterrent.

Our judicial committee has made a submission regarding not just our views but the views of thousands of Canadians who have given input through our recent task force of changes that must be made to the Young Offenders Act.

• (1310)

We encourage the Minister of Justice to seriously consider these changes which would bring accountability, restitution and punishment back to the forefront in dealing with criminal youth. Most of all it would return justice in dealing with acts of crime.

We further suggest based on the voice of the people that non-citizens of Canada convicted of a serious crime be immediately deported. Never again should there ever be another Charles Ng in this country. When I hear the minister of human resources say that thousands of Canadian children live in poverty and I think of the millions of dollars we spend to protect the likes of Charles Ng, I am flabbergasted.

I could go on for hours discussing the many things the people of this country want changed. However one change that must be implemented is the opportunity for the people to voice their concerns through a national, binding referendum on capital punishment.

Enough is enough. Now is the time to do something that will truly make this country a safer place to be for our law-abiding citizens. Let us not procrastinate or pussyfoot around any longer with these problems as the last three or four Parliaments have done.

In conclusion, I seriously believe there is not one member of the 295 in this Chamber who has not heard the cry from his or her constituents to do something about the justice system. We have