

There is no suggestion that in the detention of an individual there is punishment. It is merely prevention. It is only in such cases where the person responsible can come before the house and say that in his opinion it would be dangerous for the safety of the state in this crisis to have the person concerned at large.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): There is no such thing as clemency then?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: There is no such thing as clemency; there cannot be any such thing as clemency. In the case of Franceschini, if the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) has that in mind, I think the expression used at the time he was released that it was on compassionate grounds is an unfortunate expression, and one that was not in accord with the real finding. The real finding was that because of the condition of the man's health at that time it was not felt that his being at large would endanger the safety of the state.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): If the minister would allow me I should like to say that there is a distinction between clemency and compassion. Compassionate grounds might apply to the state of a man's health. We need to be charitable about these matters, and judicial too.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The information, which I think has been most carefully controlled, is that this man's health was such that without surgical intervention his life was a matter of days. That being the condition of his health, it was considered at that time that releasing him would not in any way endanger the safety of the state. No grounds have developed since which in my opinion would justify reinternment. Had release not been made at that time and had the case come before the advisory board, I feel that the advisory board would have been apt to recommend release. Had I been the one to receive such a recommendation, I would have approved it at once and ordered release.

The hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin) referred to a case where a man had been detained for some considerable time because the reporter had been engaged upon other business and his notes had not been submitted to the advisory committee. I agree with the hon. member in voicing strong condemnation of anything of that kind, and I wish to assure him that in so far as I can exercise supervision over these matters, such things will not occur. We do appreciate that there are probably still some internees who will be released when their cases are con-

sidered by the advisory committees. It is both in the public interest and in justice to such internees that their cases be reached and dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

The hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Douglas) adverted to the fact that under the regulations Jehovah's Witnesses are declared to be an illegal organization. I must confess that I have not had an opportunity of examining the facts relative to these declarations of illegality contained in regulation 39C, but I trust the house will agree with me when I say that so long as the regulation remains the law of the country, it is the duty of the Minister of Justice to see that it is applied. If there are any features of the regulations which should be varied, until such time as they are varied the Minister of Justice cannot take it upon himself to refrain from applying them in the terms in which they have been set out. These matters can be examined and reviewed and recommendations made by this special committee, and the recommendations of the special committee will most certainly receive the careful consideration of his excellency in council. But until such time as the regulations are modified, I feel that it is my duty to apply them as fairly and as completely as the terms require.

There was a suggestion from the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol) that, by reason of his being a layman, he felt that he should not interfere in any way with the application of the regulations. I beg to assure the hon. member that we are only too pleased at all times to receive information upon which we can rely for the purpose of dealing with these cases. Any representation that the hon. member for Davenport or the member for any other constituency may see fit to submit at any time will receive careful consideration. We shall be grateful for information coming from sources upon which we can rely.

Mr. POULIOT: Hear, hear.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I extend the same invitation to the hon. member for Témiscouata (Mr. Pouliot). Any suggestions he may make will receive the most careful consideration.

The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green) noted that this resolution does not, as did the resolution last year, provide for the examination by the committee of matters relating to naturalization and deportation. It will be noticed that the resolution setting up the special committee last year was introduced by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), and he probably felt no qualms in asking for the investigation of matters which might concern more than one department.