

can happen on Cape Breton Island it can happen anywhere in this country and we have to realize that.

Frankly I do not think we are meeting the needs of the community. As much as this legislation is an improvement it does not go nearly far enough. Perhaps the changes need not be made in this legislation itself but other pieces of legislation should be brought forward. I do not want to restrict the mobility and the thought processes of the government such as they are in dealing with the needs of our society at the present time.

I was listening last night to the *MacNeil-Lehrer Report* and they were discussing the recent riots in Los Angeles and actual racism in the cities in the United States. It was frightening, not because of what took place during the riots but that the needs and the questions in our society go unanswered. We seem to be going headlong into more urban problems, more violence, more misunderstanding, and more ignorance of the needs of our visible minorities.

• (1110)

One of the members of the panel that was discussing this question—and I say this just having heard the minister's statement on South Africa and the responses presented by the two opposition parties—one of the black Americans in discussing this whole subject said that in the United States a larger percentage of blacks are incarcerated than is the case in South Africa.

That is a very distressing statistic because we know what the situation is in South Africa. Maybe that country is not dealing with as much in corrections or what have you and there are various ways of ignoring that statistic and saying that it is not of vital importance.

Whatever excuse or explanation a person may want to give it is a vital statistic. It is important to realize that that is the case.

Also they talked about the fact that in the Los Angeles riots there were 8,000 people arrested. How is the judicial system going to deal with 8,000 people arrested if they are going to try each of these people?

And what if they do not try them? What if they say there were too many people arrested and they cannot possibly try them all? They are going to be given suspended sentences or whatever you want to do. What

is that going to do for the shopkeepers or the victims of the violence in Los Angeles?

I will tell you what it is going to do. It is going to cause a further breakdown of respect for law and order and for our justice systems in North America. We have to be able to deal with violence when it occurs. We cannot have laws which say that those who are white can get certain treatment and those who are black do not get the same treatment because they are members of a visible minority. We cannot say that because someone's store was damaged and looted during the riot, that because there was so much lawlessness, the injustice that was done to them cannot be dealt with.

If we start saying that, if we start saying because it is group violence we cannot deal with it, but if it is one individual who is committing the crimes one at a time that is okay, our system can deal with it.

If we do that we are going to cause animosity toward the victim, naturally, and we are going to cause a complete misunderstanding and a tension in our various multicultural communities.

It is absolutely ludicrous to deal with these situations the way we are dealing with them and to say that because we are in Canada this cannot happen, that is in the United States.

We saw the situation in Toronto. It may not have been as extensive as it was in Los Angeles but it was no less important to consider. It was no less serious.

We have to deal with this question. We have to deal with the question that if we are going to have urban unrest we have to be prepared to have the law support it, and we have to understand why that lawlessness occurred. We have got to not wait until the lawlessness takes place, until the violence takes place. We have to deal with it beforehand.

The Minister of Justice in response to the situation in Toronto said that it is difficult to organize a meeting that would co-ordinate the services of the federal, provincial, and municipal officials.

It takes time. We do not want to do something before we are really ready to make sure it is done properly. It will probably be a year before we can have a conference dealing with these urban problems, but do not worry. I have talked to the mayors of the major cities and asked them to come back to us concerning their problems.

Government Orders