

were really anxious to enact legislation in this matter, I cannot see where the problem lies. I say this off the cuff because I have not made a detailed study of the constitutional problems, but I would think it would follow logically that if you are responsible for one half of the problem surely you are also responsible for the other.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will take this resolution seriously. I am sorry we did not have a vote on the capital punishment bill at five o'clock and that we did not dispose of it at that time. However, having raised this particular question today perhaps we can complete it, because obviously action will not be taken on the other matter immediately. I hope the government will take seriously the proposal for compensation to innocent victims of crime and will give it serious study. We are conducting many studies in the committee on justice and legal affairs. I should like to suggest that this particular resolution be referred to that committee, although I think it would be much easier to refer it if it were in the form of a bill. In any event I give my support to the resolution proposed by the hon. member.

[Translation]

**Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières):** Mr. Speaker, it is not every day that I agree with the hon. member for York-Humber (Mr. Cowan), but this time, I think I can say that I agree with practically everything he said, especially with the principle of his notice of motion and with the proposal he has just made to the government to set up that board and appoint him to it, thus leaving vacant the seat for the constituency of York-Humber.

I am sure that if one of us were unfortunate enough to become the victim of a crime, the hon. member would be extremely generous and grant our families or those we would be leaving behind, all the expected compensations.

Therefore, I think that the principle is good: set up a compensation board and then compensate the victims of those crimes.

The hon. member for York-Humber mentioned several cases. Allow me to mention one specific case, news of which reached me last night and grieved me. I mention it because several members from the province of Quebec know the victim.

A week or two ago, gangsters broke into the residence of one of the most distinguished citizens of the heart of Quebec, the

*Criminal Injuries Compensation Board*

St. Maurice valley. Back home, Mr. Jean Crête was known as the king of the "Mauricie". For at least 50 years, he provided work for thousands of family heads, and contributed to charities. His contributions must amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps even millions; he was respected by all and exuded nothing but kindness and generosity. He even had another quality which my friends on the right will applaud: he was always an active Liberal. He was of those who were responsible for the election of the Hon. Jean Chrétien. And so, for the fourth or fifth time in the last few years, gangsters broke into his place a week or two ago, and beat him up to get his money and his jewelry. Last night, he died of his wounds in the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is a matter of poverty or indigence in his case, but nevertheless, I would like all the people of the heart of the province of Quebec to mourn the death of one of its most distinguished citizens, and I should say also, one of the greatest Canadians we have known in many years.

With your indulgence, I take this opportunity to express my sympathy to his family and his friends, and I know that in doing so, I meet the wishes of every citizen of that area in the heart of the province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is reasonable to support the request of the hon. member for York-Humber, namely that the victims be compensated for the results of crimes committed at their places, especially if one considers that most of them are poor.

● (5:30 p.m.)

The hon. member for York-Humber mentioned the constitutional barrier which could perhaps prevent the federal government from taking action in this field. However, there are several ways of getting round this difficulty.

First, I think that obstacle must be overcome, because it is important that the law be uniform throughout Canada.

If I were to go in the riding of York-Humber, which my hon. friend represents, and were killed in the smallest community there, I wonder, since I come from Quebec, if compensation would be as great as it would have been in Saskatchewan or British Columbia.

So, I think it is important that compensation be the same in every province, at a time when travel is so fast, when opportunities for