

Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1972

believe the time has long passed when these provisions should have been brought in, even if it were necessary to bring them in as separate amendments a year or two ago. Even if some amendments are made to the present provisions in the bill dealing with hijacking, we still have to ratify both the Hague and the Montreal conventions following approval of the Criminal Code amendments. It seems to me we spend a lot of time in this House spinning our wheels, so to say, not getting very far with the very specific legislation required to deal with a situation that has come upon us within a very short space of time. I have listened to the observations of those who are in the position of making this kind of decision and who suggest that in the very immediate future they will be taking some action concerning the situation confronting us. I am wondering whether the "very immediate future" means in one month, two months, one year or two years.

We all realize the serious situation regarding the kind of hijacking that has been going on during the last while, and if the minister is really concerned about this, surely some immediate action could be taken to alleviate the problem confronting the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association, the travelling public, and others who face the dilemma of whether to travel by air in view of the frightening situation that exists. As I have said, even with the passage of the bill we still have to ratify the Hague and the Montreal conventions. I hope the minister will keep in constant touch with his colleague, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), so that this matter can be taken care of as soon as this bill gets through the committee and comes back to the House, with whatever amendment may be made to it.

The hon. member who preceded me spoke of some prison situations, and in the short time that I have been a member of parliament I have had the opportunity, along with some of my colleagues, to visit both the Prince Albert penitentiary and the new Millhaven penitentiary. The latter visit did not turn out too well, since the minister decided that as members of parliament we should not perhaps go there to see what is going on behind the scenes and we were asked to leave the premises.

However, at the Prince Albert penitentiary we talked to the inmates and found all too often that the only concern of the people running the institution was to make sure the inmates were subjected to the utmost confinement. They were positive that that was the way to bring rehabilitation to the inmates. They were not concerned about rehabilitative measures that embraced technical schools and the technical courses which are available in some penitentiaries. Instead of that, they tried to ensure that the prisoners were confined to their cells for the majority of their time. Not surprisingly this only makes the prisoners bitter, and when they are released at the end of their term they vent their bitterness on society for dealing with them in this unjust way.

Even though the Millhaven penitentiary is nice and shiny, with all modern conveniences, if no real consideration is given to how prisoners in penitentiaries are treated, then what can we expect as far as law enforcement is concerned? I am sure we all recognize that our police forces try to do a good job, but when they are confronted with people who have become better as a result of serving

a term in a penitentiary how can they cope with them? With my limited knowledge, I am still of the opinion that those people involved with welfare committees, those who do not have anything, believe that the law of this land deals with them unjustly and that we in this House of Commons must become concerned if we want people to respect the law.

• (1530)

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the people who say that the law is applied in two ways have a case. I am sure the minister has run into the situation, as we all have, where people with money and position seem to be able to get away with murder, while all too often people on welfare receive the full effect of the laws passed in this House. It would appear that if you have money you can hire someone to get you off the hook. I hope that the minister realizes it is not good enough to have the best legislation in the world; we still need the realistic and human touch of those who mete out the sentences under the legislation.

I would like to suggest to the Minister that, in addition to the submissions made by the Canadian Airline Pilots Association, in addition to the submissions made by the poor people's associations and the welfare groups and others who feel they are being dealt with unjustly, when appointments are made to the various positions he give consideration to the social sciences involved in those positions, which many people now consider to be most important.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the minister speaks now, that will close debate. The hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang).

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the debate in this House on Bill C-2 would lead one to believe that we should have a fruitful discussion in committee as we move toward the passage of these new measures into law. The committee will be a more appropriate place for me to deal in detail with some of the comments of individual members on particular clauses or aspects of the bill, including such matters as the present status of the breathalyzer.

I should like to join with the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) in her remarks of appreciation to Senator Fergusson for the lead she took in the other place in connection with the provision of clauses which would put women in the same position as men for jury duty. It was an oversight on my part not to give credit to Senator Fergusson in this regard, and I appreciate the reminder.

Members on both sides have generally spoken in favour of the changes in regard to corporal punishment. I was somewhat astonished, not by the opposite point of view being taken by a member but by the tone taken by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). As I say, I can understand an attempt to make an analytical argument in favour of the deterrent effect of corporal punishment, but I was slightly astonished at his tone which seemed to suggest that by wanting corporal punishment removed the rest of us were on the side of crime. This, I think, is an unnecessary and inflammatory position to take.