

Adjournment Debate

Chamber of Commerce presents a very good argument as to why a federal penitentiary should be built in that location.

In order to allow my friend on the opposite side to make a few concluding remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will thank you for the opportunity to make my views known and will resume my seat.

Mr. John V. Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will begin by applauding the Hon. Member who moved the motion for his position on capital punishment. I appreciate that the intent behind his motion is to find an alternative to capital punishment. I would like to state for the record that I am unequivocally opposed to capital punishment and I share my friend's concerns with respect to the inevitability of the return of capital punishment if the matter is brought before this House again. In fact, I fear that if the matter were voted upon in this House, the motion would carry. Accordingly, I think we ought to do everything possible to find some alternative to capital punishment.

There is no question in my mind that it will be a very sad day indeed for this nation if capital punishment is returned to the law books of the country. It will set our country back and will indicate to the world that we are returning to the law of the jungle and that this country is uncivilized, indecent and inhumane. I certainly urge Hon. Members to give it some very lengthy thought before they speak quickly and advocate the return of capital punishment.

The Hon. Member is suggesting that a penal institution be established in a remote area of the country. I have some serious difficulties with respect to the Hon. Member's logic, although I do not for one moment question his sincerity. On the one hand, he speaks of the protection of society and the rehabilitation of inmates. I cannot imagine how a penal colony in some remote portion of the country will assist in the rehabilitation of an inmate who is serving a lengthy sentence of life imprisonment. I agree whole heartedly with my colleague, the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria), who says that life is sacred. Human life is sacred, and to banish someone to a penal colony would eliminate any hope that that person might have of some day resuming his or her law-abiding life.

I do not quarrel with the spirit of the Hon. Member's motion but, once again, I have very serious difficulties with respect to its logic. The Government ought first to determine what is the purpose of incarceration. It seems to me that the paramount purpose of incarceration is the protection of society. The second purpose of incarceration is the rehabilitation of the inmate.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that the time has expired. I would urge Hon. Members not to support the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order. The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

● (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

RESEARCH—PROPOSED TOXICOLOGY CENTRE PROJECT. (B) CONSULTATION QUERY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, on November 26 I put a question to the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) concerning the decision of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), announced in his Economic Statement, to cancel the construction of the Toxicology Centre at the University of Guelph and the University of Toronto. I asked the Minister why the centre, which is so important to the development of new information, research in toxicology and to the training of people in Canada would be cancelled by the Government.

This centre has been in the making for some ten years. A sub-committee of the National Research Council and an associated committee on toxicology have been working for ten years to put together an independent centre which was to be jointly sponsored by the federal Government, the provincial Government and industry.

In responding to my question, the Minister indicated that the cost of the centre had gone from \$32 million to \$50 million. She suggested that it was a capital cost, and that it was the federal Government's cost. In fact, those figures are not correct. The cost to the federal Government was to be \$16 million, \$10 million for capital and \$6 million for operational costs, and the same cost would apply to the Province. Private industry was to provide \$3 million for capital cost and \$5 million over a five-year period. The actual capital costs are estimated to be between \$20 million and \$23 million. Those figures have remained fairly constant. It was to be a centre of excellence for toxicology research and training. It was associated with two universities in order that post-graduate degrees in toxicology could be provided.

There is massive concern in the population with respect to toxicology and toxins associated with cancer. Dr. Emmanuel Farber, Chairman of the Board at the University of Toronto Toxicology Centre, is a pathologist in cancer research. When we turn on our television sets we are informed about concern with insecticides and with toxic chemicals in the Niagara River. The Government had a chance to spend \$10 million in capital and \$6 million in operating costs over a five-year period and, together with industry, the province and two universities, would have made a world-class facility. It is simply criminal that the Government took this decision.

The most disturbing part is that the Minister obviously had not read her briefing notes and had no idea about the whole project. The figures she used were erroneous. If the figures are