

Parole and Penitentiary Acts

except to administer justice? We are saying that the Parole Board should be able to make its decision and the individual should be able to appeal to the courts if he or she has a case. To do otherwise is a denial of natural justice. Everyone has said that in the past.

As a matter of fact, not long ago the Supreme Court of Canada addressed a similar issue. At that time it indicated that we should have a process whereby the courts would deal with the matter, and that the National Parole Board was acting outside its mandate when it acted differently.

In conclusion, my Liberal colleagues and I are not against the principles in Bill C-67. However, we want to state clearly that the process which the Senate brought to our attention, a process that was previously brought to the attention of the House and was supported at one time by the Tories, is the correct one. For the Government to pretend today that it needed to recall the House to deal with a Bill, which was only presented at the last minute and upon which the Government had sat for a year and a half, is a little less than honest. I wish all Hon. Members well in the remainder of the summer vacation after the conclusion of this debate.

● (1730)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments. The Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead (Mr. Gérin).

Mr. Gérin: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is confusing several principles in this particular matter. As a practising criminal lawyer for many years, I always had trouble explaining to the general public how someone who had been sentenced to six years in prison could be released after four years and be said to have served his full sentence. In Quebec not long ago we saw, for instance, the case of Captain Marchessault, a police officer sentenced to fourteen years in prison who was released under supervision after a year or a year and a half. And I think people would understand that judges who sentence someone to six years in prison expect inmates to serve the full six years.

So if it is a full six-year sentence and the National Parole Board examines the merits of the case, I can agree with that. What bothers me, Mr. Speaker, are these people who have received a sentence and serve their "full" time, as they say, in other words, four years out of six, when all of a sudden the rules are changed. This bothers me a little, not because of the principle but because of the practical implications. This does bother me a bit, Mr. Speaker. However, I still intend to vote against the Senate's proposal because I think that within our Canadian system, the Senate of Canada cannot ask for a referral of this kind.

I think that the Canadian people would agree that we would save a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, quite simply by abolishing the Senate or changing its vocation altogether. I fail to see what we are doing here when Members elected by the people

unanimously endorsed the principles of this legislation which is not perfect—no legislation is ever perfect, but it does not justify recalling Parliament in summer and force it to take drastic steps. Notwithstanding what Liberal and NDP Members may say, I think we ought to consider whether there might not be other ways to take the money allotted to the Canadian Senate and use it for other expenditures which might be a lot more useful to the Canadian people.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I will respond briefly to the Hon. Member. First of all, if he wants to abolish the Senate nothing prevents him today or some other day from introducing in this House a motion dealing with the issue. He is quite free to do so. Since it was not done today or until now I can only conclude that it is a new project of the Hon. Member. I am looking forward to the first sitting day in September when the Hon. Member, I am sure, will deal with the matter.

With respect to parole, I find interesting the fact that the Hon. Member would state that he is unable or has difficulty to explain to his constituents that we have a system under which an individual may be sentenced to six years and, for instance, serves only four years and his time is done, according to him. That is not quite right, but I will let it go at that. If he does not like the parole system, why did he not vote against this measure, or why did he not introduce a Bill to abolish parole? We all know that the system will still be there once Bill C-67 becomes law, and indeed I would suggest that all Parties in this House want the system to remain as is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are over. Debate. The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme).

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to recall what I said yesterday on radio and television, because I want to make sure the version is the same. I said that if it were up to me, we would be sitting here for quite some time.

Mr. Bernier: You aren't married.

Mr. Prud'homme: The Hon. Member for Beauce (Mr. Bernier)—Why these pointless remarks? Either we are here to work or we don't come at all. Our marital or personal status has nothing to do with recalling Parliament. I will go on, and if the Hon. Member wants to interrupt, I will go on that much longer. What brings me here, Mr. Speaker, is the Government's request to hurry things up, and you may have noticed the mood of agitation during this last hour in the House. Everybody is making gestures, cut here, cut there, sit down, stop talking, and this from all sides of the House!

We were called back because of a so-called emergency. What I want to move is that there is no emergency or if there was one, it should have been dealt with long ago. There are no two ways about it.

Second, there is some discussion about the Senate. This is not a debate on whether the Senate should or should not exist.