

*Criminal Code*

I am not so naïve as to think that we can put into the law provisions that will take care of this situation. What we are dealing with is a very complex social, economic and health problem that quite naturally is not only the responsibility of this place but of the provinces, the municipalities and also the various church bodies. For us to try to solve this problem would, of course, be superficial, but if we were going to try to face the problem realistically I think we should have offered more by way of legislative reform than has been presented to us by the minister in Bill C-150. We have avoided facing some of the aspects of this problem that surely must disturb us all.

When one thinks of young girls who are viciously attacked and raped and as a result become pregnant and at the same time realizes that under the provisions of this bill there will be no assistance or hope for them, when one thinks of abnormal social or family situations in which an adolescent becomes pregnant as the result of an incestuous relationship and at the same time realizes that the bill will not deal with this particular circumstance, and when one realizes that as greater medical knowledge is obtained we can predict more or less accurately the birth of badly formed offspring and that there is nothing in the bill to deal with this situation, one does wonder just what kind of reform is being presented to us in the amendments with regard to abortion.

As I said a few minutes ago, I cannot see that the legislation will really satisfy anybody very much. If all that the minister can do is just to legalize what, as the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan) said, is popularly acceptable in the law, instead of legalizing what people think the law means, which is another thing, then in my opinion we cannot call the proposed bill a reform measure. Quite frankly, I think it represents an avoidance of the issue, and this does disturb me very much.

I should like to refer to another provision that has caused considerable difficulty to some people, that popularly referred to as the legalization of homosexuality. I suggest that is not the purpose of these amendments at all. Certainly there is a fundamental misconception here. I believe the previous speaker said that the government should not be getting involved with these things, and this, of course, is exactly what the government is saying in this regard in its legislative provisions.

However, I am disturbed about the popular implications that may very well arise from these amendments. It is not only what we do that is important; equally important is what we seem to do. In this regard I think it will be necessary for the minister or for other officials, while removing from the category of crime what are considered abnormal sexual relations between consenting adults, to suggest at the same time that very serious consideration be given to the incidence of this problem and the ways in which it might be dealt with from a health point of view. I think it would be bad leadership on the part of parliament if it were to be mooted abroad that the present members of parliament had thought that they were voting in favour of encouraging or opening the door to increased homosexual or other forms of abnormal sexual behaviour. If that were to be the case, we would have done a great disservice to the people of this country.

I should like to make brief reference to the great many amendments regarding gun control and control of other weapons. In this respect I think our country has lagged much behind many other countries and parts of the world that have realized the seriousness of this problem. Perhaps we have been overly influenced by the tremendous lobby that has existed in the United States in the matter of gun control. Surely the instances of assassination of great figures during the last few years will not let us forget the importance of such regulations.

Again I feel it is not going to be enough for us merely to regulate what kind of weapons it is permissible to own, and under what circumstances. Surely, in the final analysis, weapons are controlled by men. If we prohibit certain kinds of weapons or more greatly limit their use, it would only require the imagination of man to invent some other weapon which could be used to commit a violent or anti-social act.

During this past week we have been witnessing a great increase in violent behaviour in the North American context. Both in this place and in the various committees that seek to examine the detail of what we do here we must ascertain what our response is going to be to the growing violence in the North American—perhaps I should say the western—way of life. I suggest it will not be enough to circumscribe the gun laws of this country; we must come to grips with the cause of some of the violence that is very deeply embedded in our culture.