

data, the committee of scientists will continue to perform the excellent service we have come to expect of it.

I wanted to rise and express my support for Bill C-158 and to urge at the same time that this government not stop here, but continue its efforts at the international and at the national level to protect the citizens of the world and the citizens of this nation against nuclear pollution wherever it may occur.

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, I rise not to make a speech but to ask a question. As I understand the bill which we are discussing, it would fix compensation for persons injured as a result of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. I think I am right in saying that. The parliamentary secretary to the minister in introducing this measure was at some pains to point out the unlikelihood of any such loss or damage, and the fact that it would be very small or almost negligible.

Having this in mind, I wonder whether the government, which has given so much consideration to fixing compensation in respect of people who very likely will not be injured, has considered providing compensation for those Canadians who are in more immediate danger of suffering loss as a result of the impending nuclear underground explosion to be conducted by our friends to the south, in the North Pacific within the next few months. I raise this question now because it will be recalled that last year, when a similar but much smaller test was undertaken, our government told Washington that it would hold the United States responsible for damage incurred by our citizens as the result of that test.

I thought it would be timely today—although it has nothing to do specifically with this measure—to ask the representative of the minister to accept this as a question which he might raise with the government. Inasmuch as we are going to provide some protection for civilians in respect of damage resulting from the peaceful use of nuclear energy, we in this group think it is much more timely to act to protect citizens who are in potential danger from this impending, very massive nuclear blast in the North Pacific.

I agree with the speaker who has just concluded his remarks, that Canada is playing an important role in seeking to bring about between the United States and the U.S.S.R. a test ban treaty on underground explosions. I hope that in line with general protection for civilians which the government has in mind, this effort will be stepped-up.

Criminal Records

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL RECORDS

PROVISION FOR RELIEF OF CONVICTED PERSONS

The House resumed, from February 5, consideration of the motion of the Solicitor General of Canada that Bill C-5, to provide for the relief of persons who have been convicted of offences and have subsequently rehabilitated themselves, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, we have Bill C-5 before us. It is an important measure, and if it is not carefully considered in the House and by the committee it may have very serious consequences to the welfare of Canada both as it affects the individual members of our society and the nation as a whole. At first view it may appear innocent enough, but for those who do not know what Bill C-5 is all about let me say it is an act to provide for the relief of persons who have been convicted of offences and have subsequently rehabilitated themselves. If we take the last part first, as a humanitarian and a person raised in the Christian ethic I would be the first to say let us destroy all criminal records and start anew. Unfortunately, those people who may find themselves responsible for making this decision do not have very many of the facts at their disposal.

This matter might be fairly simple in the case of a juvenile. We have had some very commendable suggestions both by the committee and in the House, that when the offender is a juvenile and becomes of age the sins of his youth should be largely forgiven. I go along with that provided of course, he has been rehabilitated. I agree with the last speaker that nobody wants to see a child of tender years carry a criminal record for the rest of his life after he has reached the age of discretion. This is particularly true if the mild correction he received from society had the desired effect and there is no real danger of his again breaking the law. We must have very firm guidelines.

As we learn more about penal psychology, which is the subject we are discussing, we find that in our genes inherited from our