

*Criminal Code*

before introduction of the bill I wrote to each provincial attorney general and in a long letter—without sending them the precise copy of the bill in order not to breach the parliamentary tradition—outlined to them in quite complete form the proposed measure I was intending to introduce, asking them for their comments and suggestions. I received no suggestions for change. Obviously, if one were to indicate the need for change, I would consider that very carefully.

As I indicated in my speech, I have had communication with a number of attorneys general—the minister of justice of Quebec, the attorney general of Ontario, the attorney general of Nova Scotia—and they have all indicated their support and willingness to work with us in implementing this bill. I am sorry to take so long in answering the question.

● (2102)

**Mr. Woolliams:** I thought you could have said yes or no.

**Mr. Basford:** Having read the comments of the attorney general of Manitoba as reported in the press when the bill was introduced, I can only conclude that he misunderstood its purport and thought it had the requirement that there be trials in both languages in every judicial district of Manitoba. That is not the effect of the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I should also like to ask the minister a number of questions before he leaves, but if the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) has additional questions I shall wait until he is finished and then put my questions.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, my question was not quite answered by the minister. I have a preamble to this question because we are going to ask for a substantial change to one part of the bill. Have the attorneys general of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the other provinces that he missed said yes or no to the principle of this bill?

**Mr. Basford:** Mr. Speaker, through official discussions each province has indicated that they support the provisions of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister if he provided additional information on this bill to members of the government. I did not catch all of his remarks tonight and I should like to know if he provided additional information to them. If so, did he discuss the question whether or not the government would consider extending the program as it relates to municipal and provincial public servants?

**Mr. Basford:** I am not sure I understand the question, Mr. Speaker. As is usual, when I introduced the bill I gave

[Mr. Basford.]

members of my caucus my written description of the bill and its effect. Regarding the latter part of the question, as I said in my speech and indicated in the press release that was attached to the bill when it was introduced, there is a program for the support of language training for provincial and municipal officials. I indicated that I would be ready to discuss an extension or enlargement of that program with the provinces in order to include court officers in language training.

The question was whether the bill would be extended to include provincial and municipal officers. That is not true as it relates to the amendment to the Criminal Code, but I indicated that we were ready to discuss extending the program to include court officers.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has not answered my question. I should like a direct answer. Did he provide additional information on this bill to government members in a two-page document entitled "Background Information"? I ask him directly if he provided additional information to members of the government that was not provided to members of the opposition.

**Mr. Basford:** Mr. Speaker, I just answered yes to that. I have not checked the difference between the press release and whatever information I sent to members of my caucus, but if there is a difference the answer is yes, and if there is not a difference the answer is no.

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, in certain parts of the country such as in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec and even some parts of Ontario, both official languages are used. Although we support the bill in principle we will ask for substantial amendment to it. The bill basically covers all the crimes set out in the Criminal Code.

The minister has said that the program will be phased in by the federal government. Clause 6(1) of the bill reads, in part, as follows:

...shall come into force in any province only on a day fixed in a proclamation...

That means a proclamation of the federal government alone. When the bill reaches the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, I shall ask that this law not be phased in in any province unless it is done by joint proclamation of the federal and provincial governments or with the consent of the province in question. In other words, before this could become law in the province of Quebec, for example, the Quebec government would have to give its consent to a federal proclamation. Before this could become the law of the land it would require enabling legislation or a proclamation of the federal government as called for in clause 6 with the consent—not in consultation with but with the consent—of the provinces.

I contend on behalf of my party and on behalf of my national leader that provincial rights in this matter must be respected.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!