

Criminal Code

History indicates that morality has been tied closely to legislation. We must recognize the facts as they exist. No one opposite has explained what benefits there might be in continuing to take criminal action against these people who are sick, and no one has denied that they are sick.

Mr. Woolliams: Would the hon. member answer another question? Taking his argument to its logical conclusion, does the hon. member think for one minute that this bill will cure anything? The bill refers to consenting adults and married couples committing acts in private. I should like to know what the hon. member thinks about the people who belong to these clubs in various urban centres. Does the hon. member think these acts are being committed in private? Let us get to the meat of this bill.

Mr. Otto: I have discussed this matter with the minister, particularly in respect of age. I do not wish to usurp the minister's position. He will explain his reasons in respect of age and consenting adults. In any event, there is no point in attempting to legislate something that will not be accepted by the Canadian people. We must make every effort to adopt legislation which is acceptable.

[Translation]

Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I have no great speech to make on the measure before the house, but still I should like to make a few remarks as pater-familias.

First of all, I must say I am opposed to homosexuality and I fail to see how this legislation can be justified. I also find it difficult to understand how the government members can fight for this measure with so much enthusiasm.

I am sure the minister himself would rather someone else had to justify his stand with regard to homosexuality and the bill now before the house.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot put forward many arguments, because previous speakers have shown in a very eloquent way that there was no need to legalize homosexuality.

Like the member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), when this measure was introduced in the house, I wondered what could justify legalization of homosexuality. We were told time after time that homosexuals were ill. Instead of legalizing homosexuality, why not treat the sick?

I fully support what has been said by the members of Champlain and of Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin) who suggest that clinics be established to take care of sick people instead of legalizing homosexuality.

Like the member for Champlain, I often wondered which associations and public bodies had made representations to the minister or to the government, in order to legalize such an illness.

On the contrary, I received many representations from associations in my constituency, asking me to emphasize their point of view in the house of commons by taking a vigorous stand against homosexuality. That is the reason why I am speaking now, in order to let the house know about the opinion of people in my constituency.

Since this measure has been under consideration, I have not received a single representation from any homosexual or other person asking me to exert pressures on the government in order to have homosexuality legalized.

Therefore, I can state without any danger of being wrong, that I express the views of the great majority of the people in my riding when I say that it is not necessary to legalize homosexuality but that it is imperative to cure those afflicted with such a sinful disease.

It is not surprising that young people have doubts about this government when they see us spend our time in the House of Commons discussing subjects such as homosexuality, then they tend to lose confidence in the government. Mr. Speaker, we should not forget that it is not the opposition which is responsible for the time wasted discussing homosexuality but on the contrary this government which introduced the measure now under consideration.

• (5:40 p.m.)

We want to gather all the forces of the opposition in order to prevent the legalization of homosexuality. I do not think that I am wrong when I say that several hon. members opposite would like to be free to do the same.

Mr. Fortin: That is true.

Mr. Ricard: Within our party, Mr. Speaker, we are free to vote according to our own conscience. Our leader has allowed us to vote according to the dictates of our own conscience and I should like to hear the government members tell us the same thing, because we have proof to the contrary.