

Criminal Code

objectives of the legislation will be reached, and I have no hesitation in recommending it to all Members.

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I intend to be brief, the reason being the decision of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Hnatyshyn) to hold a press conference at this moment downstairs. Let me simply say that Bill C-15 is a Bill to which we devoted a considerable amount of attention. During committee hearings, Liberal Members, led by myself, proposed a number of amendments.

I want to confirm what the Parliamentary Secretary has just said.

[Translation]

Indeed, a lot of cooperation existed on that committee, and the Government genuinely accepted some of our suggestions, while of course rejecting others. We have decided not to push forward at the report stage our amendment proposals, because of the wide consensus that has indeed been reached during committee work.

[English]

The committee heard from a large number of witnesses, and I want on behalf of the Liberal Party to thank all of those who took the time and the trouble to appear before the committee. Some came from as far away as Vancouver to assist the committee in its work.

While the recommendations do not go as far as the Badgley Commission recommended, they are a tremendous improvement over the present law. Bill C-15 will result in more prosecutions than has been the case to date. Many of the obstacles to bringing cases forward have been disposed of as a result of the work of the committee.

I was hoping to hear the Parliamentary Secretary say that there would be an evaluation of the effect of the changes beginning from their implementation, such that within two or three years we might have some idea as to the impact of some of the measures introduced, through this legislation, into Canadian jurisprudence for the first time.

Some are extremely innovative; some undermine traditional safeguards—which we agreed to undermine for the sake of being able to bring cases forward in the interest of seeing justice done in more cases. However, for my part, I would want to be assured that the Government is watching the situation and that if it evolves to the point that simply being charged means one will be convicted, there would be another look at the law to ensure that there is a full opportunity for an accused to bring forward his defences and to have the opportunity of having those defences fairly considered by the court.

In conclusion, I want to say to the Parliamentary Secretary that I hope that the kind of co-operation we enjoyed in dealing with Bill C-15 will apply when it comes to considering Bill C-

54, the pornography Bill. I and my Party have many more objections to Bill C-54 than we had in respect of the child abuse legislation. If we do get to the second reading stage of Bill C-54, you will hear the Liberal Party express the wish that the Bill be quickly referred to committee for detailed consideration.

Notwithstanding that there are parts of Bill C-54 with which we disagree fundamentally, we think that the pornography laws in this country, as with the child abuse laws, do need to be improved, and Bill C-54 represents a good vehicle for doing so.

We have a Minister who recognizes that the Government and those who serve the Government do not have all of the wisdom on the subject and that a parliamentary committee can do a good job, in the public interest, in making legislation better.

In that spirit, I offer our support for Bill C-15, notwithstanding that many of the amendments which we think should have been included have not been included.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I want to add the support also of our Party on Bill C-15. It is our intention to co-operate fully today to ensure the expeditious passage of the Bill.

This is legislation that all of us have been awaiting for many years. I know within our own caucus we spent probably 50 to 60 hours in discussions trying to find ways and means of fine-tuning this legislation, and toward that end we worked in co-operation with the committee, the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary.

I know that most of us have received volumes of mail from people across the country drawing our attention to the very tragic situation that exists in society today in respect of child pornography and child abuse. If there is one form of pornography that is repulsive to all, if there is one form of pornography that raises the ire of sensitive and decent people everywhere, it is that which is attached to young people. For that reason, we are anxious to facilitate the passage of Bill C-15.

I want to compliment those who have worked on the Bill. In a sense, all of those who worked on it put aside partisan differences to come together in support of an issue that deserves support in all ways and with all means to ensure the bringing to an end of the tragic situation that exists, not only in our country, but around the world, in respect of child pornography and child abuse.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, we are pleased to see Bill C-15 coming to this point in its passage through Parliament. We look forward to significant changes flowing out of this legislation. We look forward to the kind of society that we all envision, where young people and children are nurtured and supported and allowed to develop their talents and their expertise, their abilities, in every way possible. A step toward this aim is the initiative taken in Bill C-15, to bring to