

Criminal Code

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I did not deal specifically with the amendment moved by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). Obviously, I support it.

The Parliamentary Secretary is suggesting that if we oppose this Bill and support the amendment, somehow we are accepting the freedom of individuals, groups, or organizations to promote the kind of material he listed. Nothing could be further from the truth. I thought I made it very clear in my remarks that I am prepared, as are my colleagues—and as the resolution passed by the Federal Council of the New Democratic Party made very clear—to vote for legislation which deals with the problem areas. However, the point is that editorials have been written in newspapers, some of which I have put on the record opposing this Bill, and organizations have opposed the Bill as it is drafted at the present time. Individuals such as Pierre Berton and a host of others also oppose this particular Bill.

Let me deal with the question with respect to the Canada Council and what Maureen Forrester said. I put on record in the course of my speech, the full text of the statement. I will read the relevant part which I think answers the question put to me by the Hon. Member. It states:

● (1340)

A large number of artists' organizations, representing the majority of the Council's clientele, have stated that they find Bill C-54 to be not acceptable as drafted. The Council agrees with this position and will communicate its concerns directly to the legislative committee in the strongest possible way.

I have been here for quite a number of years, much longer than the Member who asked me the question. When we vote on Bill C-54, if the vote carries, which given the Government's majority I am sure that it will, the House of Commons is approving the provisions of this Bill in principle. The amendments that would be considered in committee, or back in the House at report stage, can only deal with a certain few of the clauses.

We are saying that this Bill as drafted is bad, wrong, and dangerous, and we want this Bill withdrawn. This is version number two. If we can go from version number one to version number two, there is no reason we cannot go to version number three. Therefore, if the Government withdraws this Bill and brings forward a Bill with provisions that deal with the question of pornography in a realistic manner, a Bill which would get the support of the newspapers which have opposed it, would get the support of the organizations which have opposed it and called for its withdrawal, and would get the support of the people who are knowledgeable in the area, then we in the New Democratic Party would be very happy to support it.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a point of agreeing with the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé) in his characterization of the NDP's position as identifying themselves with those who oppose any form of regulation of pornography.

I spoke on the Bill and indicated our grave reservations about this Bill which seriously encroaches upon freedom of speech. This Bill shows an insensitivity on the part of the Government and a characterization of all sex as dirty, something which is ridiculous in contemporary society and which is way out of tune with the feelings of the Canadian people as we in the Official Opposition understand them.

On the other hand, there is a lot wrong with the present pornography law. The former Government commissioned a royal commission which came out with very sensible recommendations which we would have liked to have seen implemented. I am afraid the position the NDP is taking, if it is accepted by the Government, will result in nothing happening. The Bill will disappear in the first round, which is what Members of the NDP state that they would like, and what will follow? Perhaps nothing.

Therefore, on behalf of my Party I have put forward a strategy which I would urge on the NDP of expressing our views on the repressive features of the Bill, but trying to do our work as parliamentarians to make it better.

I can understand why Maureen Forrester is very worried that this issue has been entrusted to a Government which has shown such a lack of understanding of human sexuality and of the right of free speech. She is correct about that. But they are the Government. I would urge that after a full debate on second reading, we allow this Bill to go to the committee. Let us be sure that we consider the sensible advice of Maureen Forrester, and the position taken by the NDP National Council, the position taken by my Party, and the position taken by public opinion polls which show a fair consistency across the country in approving sexuality in literature as long as it is not violent, degrading, capitalizing, and exploiting children. We do not want that. I urge the Hon. Member to change his opinion on the amendment, to let the Bill go forward, and see what we can do to make it into a sensible piece of legislation.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) knows that even if we wanted to prevent this Bill from going forward, we cannot do so, because the Government has a huge majority.

The debate will end within a reasonable time; we will vote against it; the Liberals, who know how bad it is, will vote for it—

Mr. Kaplan: No, we are voting against it.

Mr. Orlikow: —to get to committee. When it gets to committee, our members on the committee will be making reasonable amendments, just as I had hoped the Hon. Member would.

I want to say to the Hon. Member that we would have been happy to support a Bill which would have been based on the recommendations made by the Badgley commission. The trouble with the Hon. Member for York Centre, not only on