

*Criminal Code*

At this stage of our discussions, I shall be satisfied to comment, as briefly as possible, on amendments to the chapters of the Criminal Code under the headings "Offensive weapons" and "Offences tending to corrupt morals".

Section 5 of this bill amends section 82 of the Criminal Code, dealing with the possession of weapons, assimilating the imitation thereof to the genuine offensive weapon. That amendment will I am sure, receive unanimous endorsement in this house.

In recent years, more and more thefts have been committed by bandits who, in order to frighten or overpower their victims, used nothing more than an imitation firearm. This imitation weapon achieves the same result as would a real one. It is therefore logical to consider that the possession of an imitation weapon constitutes an offence identical to the possession of a real one. That is precisely the purpose of section 5 which, we hope, will help remedy a situation which, in the field of crime is becoming quite alarming.

As for sections 6, 7 and 8 of this bill, they amend sections 90, 91 and 94 in the same chapter of the Criminal Code and their purpose is to impose further restrictions on the use of firearms. Indeed the growing use of firearms is causing general anxiety.

In *La Presse* for April 21 last, Hon. Justice Wilfrid Lazure, president of the Queen's Bench Court, is quoted as saying:

There should be a law prohibiting the sale and use of revolvers in this country. During my 20 years on the bench, I have found, as everybody has, that 75 per cent of crimes are caused by firearms.

Prisoners at the bar state that they never had the intention of using their gun; yet they always do.

This solemn statement from so qualified an authority cannot fail to impress the legislator or the public.

A reporter from the *Montreal Gazette* wrote on June 1st:

*(Text):*

Police officers in a position to know estimate that upwards of 2,000 Montreal hoodlums are habitually armed with concealed weapons; and each one of them constitutes a threat to innocent bystanders, a fact proven by the fatal wounding of a young man in St. Henry last week. The identity of nearly all these hoodlums is known; but efforts to disarm them are made futile by the fact only minor penalties are called for in the law covering concealed weapons unless they are actually used in the commission of a crime, when the penalty is more severe. For each shooting incident which finds its way into a police report, there are several which are unreported, according to detectives who know of such shootings but who can't make a case on them because no one will talk. More teeth in the law covering concealed weapons would be most

[Mr. Eudes.]

welcome to police, who could then make things tough for armed hoodlums, a thing they can't do under present laws.

*(Translation):*

Yet, that impressive number of firearms does not take into account thousands of others belonging to citizens of good repute.

Is it actually necessary that so many people should legally be in possession of a firearm? Those firearms which the law allows people to possess are too frequently, in fact, the cause of fatal accidents and deplorable crimes.

How many crimes would have been avoided if people who committed them had not been in possession, even legally, of a firearm?

How is it that, in spite of the minute precautions with which law-makers have surrounded the manufacture, sale, use and exchange of firearms, any self-respecting bandit manages to get one, and often several, of those dangerous objects?

Either the law is not stringent enough, or it is not adequately enforced.

The proposed amendments embodied in sections 6 and 7 of the bill are an improvement on the present legislation which will henceforth extend to persons who lend a firearm or are engaged in the business of repairing firearms.

Let us hope those amendments will help reduce the number of arms which, somehow come into the possession of people who should not have them.

One should not, however, overlook the necessity, for the sake of public safety, of a frequent review of the situation in that field as well as the enforcement of the law in all its rigour.

Now, Mr. Speaker, may I be allowed to make a few remarks on sections 11, 12 and 13 of bill C-58 amending the Criminal Code under the chapter entitled "Offences tending to corrupt morals".

*(Text):*

**Mr. Speaker:** I wonder if the hon. member would consider dealing with these specific items in committee? I appreciate the bill proposes a number of unrelated amendments and there is no general idea to discuss. If the hon. member wishes to group clauses together he may do so, but it seems to me we would have more orderly discussion of the amendments if the clauses were discussed as they are called in committee when there can be debate on each particular item as it comes up.

**Mr. Chevrier:** Mr. Speaker, may I draw your attention to the fact that the hon. member has been selected to be the spokesman for the opposition, and it did appear to us at the time that if he made a statement on