

Criminal Code

law if, thanks to it, it is possible to better promote the commonweal while respecting the various religious beliefs, opinions, mentalities and customs. It is self-evident that one could not consider such a law as a moral approval of the behaviours it allows. One can certainly not accuse Saint Augustine of having promoted prostitution. He stated however that in his days, the political rulers would have been unwise to forbid it.

3) The legislator must take into account the pedagogical aspect of the law.

However, that educational role must be adjusted to some extent to the moral level of the people. In this respect, the habits and rules of behaviour of a given civilization must be taken into account. Besides, this principle applies to every form of education.

When legislating for a population of 21 million, divided into ten provinces where various religious persuasions are found, opinions vary of necessity on matters the government itself does not have to settle.

I now resume the quotation:

4) The citizens do not all agree in matters of moral standards. The legislator is not legislating for a specific group but for the political community as a whole. It follows that, on behalf of the Catholic conscience, one can reprove a specific moral behaviour while admitting the merits of the legislation that tolerates it.

And I say again what I have already said in this house: I do not feel it would be right for me to impose my religious beliefs on anyone else in Canada.

To go back to the quotation:

5) Catholics, as much as any other citizens, have the right and the duty to exert pressures that the laws might reflect as much as possible the values they consider fundamental for the protection of the commonweal. But, in so doing, they must not fall prey to sectarianism and intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the debate, we have heard all kinds of things concerning sectarianism and intolerance. Open or veiled charges have been brought against those who are not opposed to the bill.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I suggest that some of these charges are absolutely untrue. For instance, it was said that abortion and homosexuality were being legalized. That is not true. Quite special, exceptional and marginal cases are involved, under very specific circumstances.

Mr. Fortin: That is not true.

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Speaker, some people went even further: during the last electoral campaign, it was intimated that the leader of the government himself could be depraved, because he advocated such a bill. It seems to me that that is in full contradiction with the religious principle, acknowledged by all

faiths, namely that charity is the first duty of those who boast of their religious principles.

Mr. Speaker, after reading the evidence prepared by theologians who do not belong to the lesser breeds, and published in an official review of the diocese of Quebec, let them give up that kind of religious demagoguery, shot through and through with the most odious type of intolerance, and inflicted upon us since we started to discuss this bill; we should realize that as legislators, we should neither hear confessions nor judge.

Some day, the Creator will do all that, He who looked into the heart of Man. Our function lies in making laws, according to common sense and to the rules that have just been set by Catholic theologians and theologians from other religions, who as much as say that this bill does not go far enough.

I think it is important that this be put on record.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. The hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, this debate is getting too long. Obviously, everything that can be said about this amendment relating to homosexuality has already been said.

We hear hon. members repeating the same arguments over and over, and if all members could co-operate we could perhaps carry on with another amendment.

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to thank my colleague from Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) for sponsoring in my absence the amendment I had introduced, because I had to undergo some medical examinations. I want to thank also the hon. members from this side of the house who supported my amendment.

The amendment I am moving is very simple, Mr. Speaker. Its purpose is merely the deletion from the omnibus bill, of section 7 which deals with homosexuality.

I would not want my proposal to be understood by some government members and particularly the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain) who has just resumed his seat after presenting so eloquently a religious principle, and after having accused the opposition to take refuge behind religion, he himself—