

Criminal Code

is bleeding because the government insisted, because of the antagonism of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), on bringing in this bill, no matter what other important questions were facing the nation, and ramming it through the house. I am not one of those who are critical of my hon. friends to the left. That little group has fought and stood for the principles in which it believes. These hon. members are content to have their names publicized and to be accused of filibustering. They feel deeply about this question. The minister knew this when he introduced the bill. The Prime Minister knew it. We are now engaged in a debate on this contentious issue. The bill contains many worth-while amendments. The minister knows how I and my party feel about amendments to the Criminal Code.

When we rose in our places almost a month ago we asked the minister to divide this bill so that the consciences of members of parliament and of Canadians could better be expressed. However, the minister expressed the antagonism of the Prime Minister and would not divide the bill. The minister knows that the promise was made, without any equivocation, that the bill would be divided. The president of the Liberal Association of the minister's own constituency has resigned because he believes, as do many of us, that the minister promised the bill would be divided. The only reason the bill was not divided—and the minister knows this—is the fact that he is a member of a tight cabinet, in which one minister has already resigned, and which is getting pretty shaky.

As one hon. member said the other night, the minister is a man of integrity. If he had kept his promise and that of his party, he would have divided this bill. If that had been done, we would not be having this kind of debate that has been criticized, and properly so, by the newspapers. The criticism should not be directed toward the Ralliement Cr ditiste, because they are men who believe they are expressing the will and the conscience of the people who elected them. The onus is strictly on the government because they intend to ram this bill through, irrespective of the consequences. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) can shake his head. He cannot sell wheat but he agrees with the fact that when this bill goes through we will have another confrontation in respect of the language bill.

● (9:20 p.m.)

This nation is crying for action on economic matters. Canadians are looking for direction

[Mr. Woolliams.]

and leadership from a government which they thought would give them a "just society". Today, I asked a question of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) which was relevant to this subject. I asked the Prime Minister what he intends to do for the old age pensioners who now have to live on less than \$80 a month. He is doing nothing, so he would not get up and answer my question. Yet we are now engaged in this debate, and the onus for this situation lies directly on the minister, the Prime Minister and the whole cabinet.

I do not think for one moment that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) really endorses this debate or this filibuster, but he knew it was going to come. As a great trial lawyer, as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada he has sufficient intelligence that he must have known this would happen. A month ago he said this bill should be divided so that Canadians could speak as their consciences dictate. Tomorrow morning, when the press and all the communication media that form public opinion in this nation inform the Canadian people of the filibuster that is taking place in parliament, I will remind the minister that the onus is not on those members who are carrying on the debate because of their deep religious conviction and the dictates not only of their consciences but of the consciences of Canadians throughout the land, including Canadians in the area which I represent.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Woolliams: I say to the Ralliement Cr ditiste that they can be a proud little group. Whether or not I agree with their methods, they have stood for what they believe. But I ask the minister in all sincerity this question: Is he standing for what he believes and did he do so when he told the Liberal party in his own riding that he would divide this bill? Was he standing for what he believed when he said to his own executive "this party should have a free vote"? Where is the free vote? The fact is that we are now tied up in a debate which I described the other night as nonsense, because the minister will not measure up to his responsibility and the Prime Minister's ego is being expressed through the minister. The minister has become a slave of the Prime Minister. He knows the Prime Minister is wrong. Why does he not stand up in the House of Commons tonight and say he will delete this section from the bill and allow the rest of this reform bill to be passed? If he does this, at 9.30 tonight we will be able to get back to serious business.