

*Criminal Code*

Mr. Speaker, the second paragraph is most important.

Unfortunately, few members have had the time or the opportunity to consider the amendments carefully. Therefore, very few clearly understand the meaning and the reasons of the amendments proposed. We noticed that such a confusion exists not only among members of the government party and the opposition parties, but even among members of the cabinet.

The *Alliance pour la vie* gives evidence of that in the third paragraph, which reads as follows:

During a conversation with one of our members on August 29 last, the Minister of Justice admitted that the government had formed its opinion on the matter of abortion before due consideration had been made. He—

Mr. Speaker, is there anything less responsible, more immature than to propose amendments to a legislation before having considered it, all its implications and all its consequences?

The hon. member for Hull or rather the dull member for Hull, as said the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau), said that he was eager to know what succeeding generations will think of our interventions.

I do not know whether he has listened to or read my other speeches on this subject because I spoke on several occasions. In fact, this is not the last one either since I intend to speak on each amendment.

As I have pointed out, I want at least posterity, that is to say my own children and others, to know that we stood our ground, that we made our views known, that we challenged the position of the government on this question. I feel sure that sooner or later we shall overcome.

The standing committee on health, welfare and social affairs held hearings on the question in the fall and winter. However, as the proceedings will show, the amendments had been drafted before the committee hearings. And we are told that we are not serious to fight in such an untimely way, if I may put it that way, those clauses of the bill! If we are putting up such a fight it is for reasons we are not afraid to explain openly; it is for scientific reasons, for medical reasons and because the government does not face its responsibilities and is passing legislation before having considered it carefully.

The following is the text of a document that everyone has received. I am quoting:

In December last, the government exerted pressure on the committee in order that an interim report should be prepared before having heard

[Mr. Matte.]

the majority of briefs. Neither the government, nor the committee in its sympathetic report, rely on the proceedings to justify the proposed amendments.

Mr. Speaker, the more I keep on reading this text, the more I get worked up, the more I find this situation ridiculous and childish. That is why I keep harping on about that. I had already put on the order paper a question for the minister asking him if:

—some organizations were bringing pressure to bear on the government to promote the passage of the omnibus bill?

If so, what were those organizations?

On which of the three subjects—homosexuality, divorce, abortion—were the pressures the strongest?

The minister answered in the negative. I have it here, it is the original and complete text.

On the other hand, several organizations have sent us representations and the minister still answered no. Then, he said, and I quote:

Several organizations made representations in favour or against such and such provision of Bill C-195, the first reading of which took place—

Of course, it was the former bill, Bill C-195.

As far as abortions are concerned, here are some organizations that have made representations to us on this subject. I want the minister to tell us—there is a whole page here—how many are in favour of the bill and how many are against it.

According to my information and the documents we have received, not two are in favour of this bill which was given so little consideration prior to its introduction.

I am taking the minister's words, namely that no organization has brought any pressure to bear.

But, a great many organizations have opposed this bill. On that basis, we feel quite justified in defending our position fiercely.

I continue the quotation:

The official explanations given by the government for broadening the grounds for abortion are inconsistent and contradictory. It seems that the proposed amendments are designed to make a distinction between sin and crime and mainly to clarify the existing act.

• (5:50 p.m.)

That is what the minister had said and before him, the former minister of justice, the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau).

The purpose of the legislation was to make a distinction between sin and crime.

The explanations contradict each other and will not bear examination.