

Criminal Code

legislation. We have been able to explain the reasons why we were opposed with all our might to the implementation of this legislation, namely because we believe that the population does not want it and that everyone of us here has a heavy responsibility as far as legislation is concerned. And if there is a piece of legislation whose consequences will be serious, it is indeed this one.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have known since last night that the committee on regional development, composed of 20 members, will leave the capital Monday night on a study tour. We anticipated that the vote would be taken on the amendment and on the main motion on Tuesday, since Monday is a holiday.

In view of the fact that Thursday is an opposition day and that Friday is a rather short day, it would have been easy for us of the Ralliement créditiste to line up several speakers in order that they express their views on the matter.

As far as I know, the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin), the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe), the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Godin), the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Tétrault), the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Rodrigue), the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier), the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne) and the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau), could speak again on that matter. The debate could last until Tuesday; however, that would be anti-democratic, for the simple reason that two main things matter in this house, that is first, to discuss legislation and second, to vote.

Now, as we would like the question to be put this afternoon, we are ready to give up our time for that purpose and to allow all hon. members to vote according to their conscience this afternoon not only on the very good amendment moved by the hon. member for Champlain but also on the main motion, for we are anxious to know the opinion of each member, in particular the opinion of those on the government side, on the matter.

It would be regrettable to allow these hon. members to abstain from participating in a vote which could be taken Tuesday, and thus deprive the population from knowing how each hon. member would have voted.

I therefore conclude my remarks even if I have still a few minutes to speak and even if there are still about ten of our members who were most willing to take the floor in order to allow everyone to vote according to

his conscience, not only on the amendment brought in by the hon. member for Champlain but on the main motion.

It is important that hon. members should vote and we do not want them to dodge their responsibilities. That is why we are taking that position.

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I thank the previous speaker for having accepted to cut short a little his remarks on the amendment of his colleague and on the main motion, that is on third reading of that bill.

I have decided to shorten my last comments quite a bit in order to enable hon. members to be called and vote, so that the Canadian public and parliament will know the views of all hon. members on that basic question, resting on the most important principles which we have had to discuss in the history of this parliament and previous ones.

Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. I would like, however, since it is my last opportunity to do so, to thank those of my colleagues who were kind enough to bring in my amendments, during my absence. I thank them all the more because I could not be in the house to give the reasons and arguments I had to support those amendments. I take this opportunity to extend to them my warmest thanks.

Mr. Speaker, we have really reached the end of a lengthy debate. The members of the Progressive Conservative party took part in it in a very modest way. We agreed in a general way to leave the debate to our colleagues of the Ralliement créditiste, not that sometimes we did not have extremely important arguments to set forth, but we believed that the time to really work efficiently, as the government had promised, was in the committee of justice and legal affairs, where we could put forward our amendments and viewpoints.

The committee report has been tabled in the house. We shall be called upon this afternoon to vote on the motion for third reading. However—and I must say that, Mr. Speaker, since my remarks deal with the amendment that has been moved—we tried several times in the committee to convince the government that some of the amendments were necessary to protect both public morality and the medical profession, and especially the medical practitioners who stood against the bill before the committee because they were themselves, in conscience, against the practice of abortion.