

*Criminal Code*

carefully sealed in a brown envelope, and which, as regularly as we receive it, we throw into our wastepaper baskets. I suggest that there is at least \$18,000 which might be earmarked for a better class of reading. There is a difference between government acquiescence and government leadership.

In this matter of the selection of literature there must be somewhere in the department—and I think it should be in the department of customs and excise—men who have some knowledge of these things, whose literary taste—and I draw attention to that expression—is above reproach, and who have some wide knowledge of literature as well as experience in the matter of mere living.

Having stated my objection to censorship generally, I want to say this about these particular crime comics, these things which the hon. member who spoke before me said are realistic, but which are not. There is a difference between a thing which is essentially realistic, as a part of a serious novel, and a thing which is made deliberately pornographic and filthy so that it may become a best seller or appeal to moronic minds.

There are children of ten, twelve, fourteen and fifteen who have not the experience in living to enable them to distinguish the good from the poor in that particular regard. Since this is a matter having to do with youth, I am giving to this bill my hearty support. I should like to congratulate the sponsor upon the courage and initiative he has shown in bringing it to the house. I should also like to congratulate the government upon adopting that bill with the necessary amendments. It has my hearty support, and I believe it will have the hearty support of the country as well.

**Mr. Shaw:** Hon. members are aware of the fact that from time to time over the years the hon. member for Macleod has raised his voice in protest against the distribution of crime comics and obscene literature. Were he not unavoidably absent from the house this morning, I am sure his voice would be heard again. He would do as he did earlier in this session; he would compliment the hon. member for Kamloops upon bringing Bill No. 10 before the house. He would also compliment the minister and the government upon the action which they are taking now.

A few weeks ago my leader, the hon. member for Peace River, advanced what he considered to be a positive program to deal with this subject. In supporting the bill as amended, the hon. member for Macleod would naturally be speaking for all of us in this group. We are pleased that this action is being taken, and we will support the measure.

**Mr. Fulford:** Last spring, Mr. Chairman, it was my privilege to attend a public speaking contest held in the town of Brockville; it was a contest among the school children of Brockville and district. The debate was won by a twelve-year-old girl whose topic was the harm or value of comic books. Subsequently this little girl won a contest, sponsored by the Ontario trustees and ratepayers association of eastern Ontario, participated in by public schools representing all counties in eastern Ontario, including the city of Ottawa. It was a great privilege for me to listen to this little girl, because a more stinging indictment could not have been made by anybody than was made by Nancy Howard of Brockville. The substance of her short discourse was the fact that all comic books are not harmful, but unfortunately the younger mind was not in a position to tell the difference between what is good and what is bad. She had a number of them pasted on a large board, and with a pointer she indicated those that she considered bad.

Let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, that later I went to the trouble of going to a bookstore and buying some of these publications, and I can testify that she was right; not only was it not fit literature for children, but it was not fit literature for adults. She pointed out then the comic books which depicted biblical stories, historical stories and nature stories, and which were good. I certainly think that if a child of twelve—and I was later assured by her teacher that this work was done entirely on her own initiative, without any help—can point to the danger that exists in the material on the bookstands and in the bookstores of Canada, it is indeed time that we in the House of Commons woke up.

I want to commend the hon. member for Kamloops for his initiative in bringing this bill forward for discussion and consideration. It should have been brought forward years ago. It is one of these things that has just grown. When comic books originally came out, there was no harm in them, but they were not good literature. The harm has crept in until today we must take a decided stand and see that these books are swept from our bookstands and bookstores.

There is little more I need to add, except a comment that may be of some interest. Yesterday I was speaking to the principal of one of Brockville's public schools, who told me that within the last few months the public library has been thrown open to the school children, and that the teachers take their classes there and instruct them in what are good books for the younger generation to read. As a result he says that there has been a marked decrease in the number of crime