

Criminal Code

years so that we may measure the effect and impact, both direct and indirect, of the amendments contained in this bill. This should be done in co-operation with the appropriate authorities across Canada at all levels. Should unsatisfactory trends be indicated as stemming from any of these amendments to the Criminal Code, then let the government move courageously and immediately to introduce further amendments to strengthen the code to the end that the quality of Canadian life and the quality of Canadian society may continue to be improved. This, surely, should be the reason for legislation in this house, to strengthen the family and to strengthen society in order that we may build a better nation.

• (8:10 p.m.)

Having suggested that a five-year test be established, let me point out that the British did not hesitate to establish a five-year test in connection with the proposal to abolish capital punishment. While I suggest this test, let us never hesitate to amend the legislation if necessary to correct weaknesses or to remove sources of possible abuse which may become apparent before the five year interval has expired.

I must tell hon. members of this house that on two or three occasions I have discussed with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) this proposal carefully to review and survey the effects of the bill in the most intensive way over the course of the next few months and years to make sure there are no abuses. For example, in the area of abortions, there should be a review to ensure that we do not see in Canada the establishment of an abortion mill of the kind that is plaguing some nations of the world at the present time.

This afternoon the minister gave the assurance that, following passage of this bill, he would closely review and survey the effect it is having on the people of Canada. I feel sure the minister will take appropriate steps to bring in further amendments to make certain that the quality of Canadian life is protected. I am pleased to have this assurance, and I think all of us should welcome it. I have known the Minister of Justice for some considerable period of time. He has spent a great deal of time in my native province, and I know him to be a man of considerable conscience. He is known as that type of man to many of those who occupy the opposition benches. He is a good Minister of Justice.

Anybody who assumes that the last few weeks or months have been easy for the Minister of Justice do not know the minister

[Mr. Perrault.]

very well. This period has involved a great deal of personal hard work. Many problems have troubled his conscience, as they have troubled all members of the house. The past few months have been a heavy burden for him, just as they would have been a heavy burden on some members of the official opposition had they occupied positions of government responsibility. As anybody in public life knows, it takes courage to introduce the type of controversial amendments that have been discussed during the debate on this bill. It takes courage to bring in measures relating, for example, to the post office—and I see my hon. friend in the house this evening.

A weaker or less dedicated Minister of Justice could well have chosen an easier political course, one which would have preserved the status quo, with all of the anachronisms and hypocrisies that have plagued this nation for too long. It would have been easy to find all sorts of excuses to delay action. This government, Mr. Speaker, has followed the harder road, and I think most members of the house appreciate the nature of the decision made by the government in this controversial area of the Criminal Code.

As a backbencher I have confidence that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Minister of Justice and their colleagues earnestly seek reform in the best interest of a pluralistic Canadian society. I am convinced that they want to see a more satisfactory and meaningful Criminal Code. I submit that they deserve our support.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, in spite of all that has been said on Bill C-150 and of the amendments that have been proposed in the house, we have reached third reading.

This afternoon, I was listening to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) who explained that, first, the bill had been drafted—everyone knows that—introduced in the house for first reading and printed, debated on second reading and referred to the committee.

The committee examined each clause of the bill and amendments were proposed. Today, we have reached the third reading stage.

The minister said this afternoon that parliament had every opportunity to consider this bill and that finally the majority of parliament would decide on it.

Now, everybody knows that when the bill was read for the first time, my colleagues and I strongly objected to it.