

*Criminal Code*

Speaker, that the longer we debate, the more we drift away from the subject.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, that so far, in most cases, a basic aspect has been overlooked: that of the Canadian youth. Let us think of it lest we have to deplore tomorrow the steps taken today.

Mr. Speaker, there is in the April issue of *The Canadian Family*, a magazine edited in Ottawa by the Canadian Family Conference, a good article by Frederick Elgin. I would like, Mr. Speaker, to draw the attention of the house on the subject for it is of the utmost importance. Before passing or rejecting this motion, it is every member's duty, in my opinion, to think of the Canadian youth. Reading this article, Mr. Speaker, is illuminating. We tend too often to forget, for instance, that in 1951 there were 4.9 million young people under 18 years of age in Canada who tomorrow will have become adults and will be responsible for our society.

By 1961, that population had increased. The number of young people had grown to 7,100,000. That is an unbelievable, fantastic increase of 45 per cent.

The Canadian people are growing ever younger. The average age of Canadians is decreasing. Let us now look at 18 to 24 year olds. From 1951 to 1961, the rate of increase of that sector of the population was 13 per cent.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the bill we are about to pass or defeat, depending on the seriousness of our principles and our wish to pass laws that are really useful, will have more bearing on the young people of Canada, students and workers, than on the older people, since more and more, and especially since 1951, the rate of growth of the Canadian population between 18 and 24 years, and under 18, has increased constantly.

That is to say, Mr. Speaker, that to my mind it is criminal to set the minimum age at 21 in clause 7 of the bill now before us.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that our young people are concerned. Several persons, several members, will say, especially on the government side: If we go by the introductory speech of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) in the house, this bill will remove from the Criminal Code sections 147, 148 and 149 that deal with homosexuality or sexual relations between two consenting persons of the same sex, and it will have no bearing, directly or indirectly on our young people.

Mr. Speaker, if under the pretext of making the law more humane and adapting the

Criminal Code to a pluralistic society, more freedom must be given to the human being, we commit the crime of throwing our young people, our Canadian youth into a society that does not generally respect love, one's fellowman, the human being, and the right of the individual, to fulfill himself according to his own principles.

However, if we prevent those young people from growing up freely according to their skills, abilities and principles—for they have them—instead of making the Criminal Code more human, we will have committed the greatest crime in the century, since we will have abolished all that could make of them the honest and serious leaders of tomorrow.

When the minister states that the bill will have no repercussions on people, I would like to remind him that the present government has already held an inquiry on juvenile delinquency in Canada. I have here a very interesting book which was published under the auspices of the Department of Justice.

One can find a mine of information therein. This is how is defined the expression "juvenile delinquent" from a legal standpoint, and I quote:

Any child who violates any provision of the Criminal Code or any Dominion or provincial statute, or any by-law or ordinance of any municipality, or is guilty of sexual immorality or any similar form of vice.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, this legal definition of the expression "juvenile delinquent" classifies as a vice any sexual deviation or immorality. Youths are condemned, they are put in jail, they are sent to reformatories, they are even prevented from getting a good start in life. They are not given all available opportunities. According to which criteria are they condemned?

It deals with sexual immorality or any similar form of vice. One can find it again on page 8 of that document published in 1965, under the auspices of the Department of Justice.

I hope that the minister read it. Mr. Speaker, some people rationalize their indictment against youths who maybe did not get all required opportunities to find their niche in society. Everything is done to prevent those youths from finding their place in society; people brandish the criteria of sexual immorality or any similar form of vice.

Is there something more illogical, more inhuman and more stupid than that, Mr.