

*Criminal Code*

the hon. member to be a man of authority, compassion and with an interest in social justice. We all are proud that he has brought forward Bill C-27 at this time. As a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs I should like to say that I do not think we should waste much time in bringing this bill before the committee for study. I would hope also that the committee would report and that the report would be implemented. I notice that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General is in the House. I hope he will suggest to the Solicitor General that it would be most unfair and unwise at this time to allow this bill to be talked out. I believe the motion should be passed and the bill referred to the standing committee.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Having said that, I am also in agreement with the intent and the purpose of the amendments to section 12 and section 13, and the new amendment to section 13(a). These have been long overdue. It has only been by the persistence of the hon. member that we have them brought forth. Last year we had the opportunity to study and to pass the omnibus bill with regard to amendments to the Criminal Code, and after some persuasion I think the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) is contemplating another series of amendments to the code. We would like to think it is also in the form of either an omnibus bill or a mini-bill.

We have had the Ouimet Commission report with regard to criminal matters within the country, and recommendations have been made by it. I hope the Minister of Justice will bring forth a bill immediately with regard to arrest, detention, bail and uniformity of sentencing, to be followed by a bill by the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith) which, as the hon. member for Welland (Mr. Tolmie) said, would be a young offenders' act. I cannot be too critical of what has happened in that regard to date. I recall that a committee on juvenile delinquency was set up in 1961 or 1962 to study this matter and after four years they presented a report. That report was tabled in 1966. It contained many recommendations and we are still awaiting implementation of the recommendations in it.

It is all very well for the chairman of the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee to say we are bringing forth a young offenders' act, and I am sure he wants it. But we have to take action. The Solicitor General must bring

it forth, and when he does I hope that either he or the Minister of Justice will introduce a mini-bill and incorporate the amendments that the hon. member for Calgary North has set forth.

The hon. member prefaced his remarks by saying that it is the environment which is so important with regard to youth today—the home environment, the church environment and the community environment. He became quite poetical, and rightly so, with regard to Byron. I could quote Byron myself; he is one of my favourite poets. He said, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." We have learned from experience that the penitentiaries we have built have done nothing with regard to the reformation and rehabilitation of young offenders. Last Friday the Solicitor General presented to the House amendments to the Parole Act. They were just housekeeping amendments. Instead of bringing forth amendments which were of substance, he resorted to housekeeping amendments and last Friday we debated what should have been in that bill.

The hon. member for Calgary North has set forth the ages of young offenders who have been confined to penitentiaries. He pointed out that in 1968 there were two inmates, one 15 years of age and one 16 years of age, 136 inmates of 17 years of age, and so forth. Last Friday I pointed out that in 1967 we had four inmates 15 years of age; 15, 16 years of age; 62, 17 years of age; and 127, 18 years of age. I also pointed out that if you were to draw three broad categories of young offenders, from age 15 to 20 you would have 8 per cent of the population of our penitentiaries, from age 20 to 40 you would have 74 per cent and the balance would be men and women over 40 years of age.

We cannot overstress the importance of the treatment of young offenders up to age 16, and really up to age 21. It has been said in the Ouimet report that we should categorize young people up to age 18 as young offenders. As the hon. member for Welland has said, at no time should we call them juvenile delinquents. Possibly the delinquents have been the parents, the churches and the community organizations in not taking their full part in developing the character and moral values of these young people.

It is very important, Mr. Speaker, that we get uniformity with regard to age groups. It may be that the Ouimet Commission is right, that the first group should be young offenders up to 18 years of age. It makes my heart sick, Mr. Speaker, when I think of the provinces