

tion 2 of this Bill you say to the young man:

No male person under the age of twenty-one years shall be prosecuted for any offence under the provisions of this section.

If I have a suggestion to make respecting this legislation, it is to strike out the whole of the proposed new section 211 and amend section 211 of the Code as follows:

Every one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable—

Not to two years but—

—to six years' imprisonment who seduces or has illicit connection with any girl of previously chaste character.

That is the first amendment I would make. And the second amendment I would make would be to leave out all words after the word "character." The words in the present Criminal Code which I propose to leave out are as follows:

Of or above the age of fourteen years and under the age of sixteen years.

The clause as I propose it would then read:

Every one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to six years' imprisonment who seduces or has illicit connection with any girl of previously chaste character.

Mr. McMASTER: How would you define "girl"?

Mr. DEVLIN: I define a girl just as she is defined under the Criminal Code. I would not limit her age, provided she was of previously chaste character. I say that no man, especially the class of men the Minister of Justice referred to as most apt to show their passions and to commit this crime, would be entitled to have illicit connection with any girl of previously chaste character.

An Hon. MEMBER: Even if she were fifty years of age?

Mr. DEVLIN: I am not particular about the age. I have know of cases where girls over that age were before the courts. If there are hon. gentlemen in this House so very particular as to limiting the girl's age, then they can suggest a limit to the age. But I have known cases such as this: a woman who was not in full possession of her faculties has been seduced by a young man of twenty years of age. By this proposed new legislation that woman would have no redress before the courts. We are dealing with a section of the code which gives a free hand to every young man up to twenty-one years of age to commit a

[Mr. Devlin.]

crime. Such legislation ought not to be tolerated.

Mr. F. B. STACEY (Westminster District): I congratulate the Minister of Justice upon the general character of the amendments proposed in this Bill. I am sure it will be a cause of deep satisfaction to the right-thinking citizens of this country, comprising, I believe, the great majority of the population, that the minister has brought down such important amendments to the Criminad Code. This Bill, perhaps more than ordinary Bills, lends itself to a discussion that is comparatively, if not entirely, free from all sectional considerations, and, therefore, in my remarks I shall try to speak as a man to men, irrespective of race, religion, or party. I have reason to believe that there are great numbers of our best Canadian citizens who would go even further than the minister has gone, and would favour raising both the age of consent and the age of seduction higher than is provided for in his amendments. With this view I do not hesitate to declare myself in full sympathy, but I do not intend to suggest any further change at present. I mention it merely to indicate to the minister that he has not gone beyond the judgment of hundreds of thousands of the best people of our country. I do, however, ask that the minister will accept an amendment to clause 2 of section 211, and which I have drafted as follows:

That the word "twenty-one" be stricken out of line 16 and the word "eighteen" be substituted therefor.

It will then read:

No male person under the age of eighteen years shall be prosecuted for any offence under the provisions of this section.

It will readily be acknowledged that the subject matter of this clause has a direct and vital bearing upon the domestic life of the people of Canada and I submit that any matter so closely related to the welfare and happiness of our Canadian homes is worthy of our most serious consideration. It is considered by some people that it is scarcely within the scope of Federal legislation to have very much to say or to do with family life. This idea is probably based on the assumption underlying the well-known phrase that an Englishman's house is his castle; but we have learned that if it is necessary to do so to protect the interests of society, any man's castle may be invaded by the State. It is not necessary to argue to-day that what Canada needs is more homes; that the social and