

*Criminal Code*

great length. I do not think the question of censorship really enters into this debate. This particular bill does not call for censorship as such. As I understand it, it asks that the circulation of a certain type of book be made illegal, and then it will be left to someone to originate court action. If that court action were taken and punishment were handed out to the people who sell these magazines, it is presumed that it would be a deterrent to people of a like class. I understand that that is the purpose of the bill. Personally I have not made up my mind whether I am in favour of it or not. It is a tremendously difficult problem. Whether you are thinking of censorship or not, you are making the judge and jury into censors. The question is whether the judge and jury of twelve honest men and true are competent to carry out the censorship. I do not know. If they cannot do any better than the department of customs and excise I do not think we had better start, because, as I said on a previous occasion, I have no confidence in that particular body to carry out censorship. If we are to have censorship then it will have to be an efficient censorship. It would be a more efficient censorship system if it were done by people who had the necessary background, education, experience and training, and we would have much more confidence in their competence to perform such censorship. This brief contains the opinion of one who has made some study of this matter. I refer to Mr. Sandwell of Toronto *Saturday Night*. Like myself, he is opposed to censorship generally, but listen to what he has to say. Mr. Sandwell expresses himself as "strongly opposed to censorship except for the juvenile who is incapable of performing the act of judgment necessary to choose between good and evil ideas." I mentioned this the other day in a short speech I made on a kindred subject. We are dealing with two classes of people, people whose characters are formed, and people who are vulnerable, in that they are exposed to outside environment, without having much judgment in choosing what part of that environment they wish to make their own. I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis), who is in favour of the positive approach to this problem. The hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Goode) has argued that if the home were right, if the proper guidance were given, these bad effects would be overcome. I would go perhaps even further and say that the child of a certain age should have some experience in these things, but under proper guidance. But

there again the parents, like the judge and jury to whom I referred, would have to have some competence in the matter.

I am afraid that many parents in this country adopt the wrong attitude toward these comics. I have found as a matter of experience that many of them simply dismiss the whole question of literature for children of 7 to 14 years of age by assuming that, because they have the comics, they do not need anything more.

I repeat that in this country and on this North American continent there is a tremendous dearth of literature for young people. In this connection we owe a debt, but of the wrong sort, to our United States friends. Our imitation of them is a part of the inferiority complex which Canada has developed. The result is that we have not gone into the field of literature for youth or indeed into any field of literature with outstanding success. It is certainly true that there is nothing in this country for the young people to read as compared with what is available to young people in other countries, particularly in Great Britain. In that country there is a great choice of reading matter for young people as well as for adults.

I suggest that instead of censorship or court action we institute a counter-attack by substituting things that are good for things that are evil. There should be a cultivation of taste for good literature while people are still young. Let us give our young people better literature, but if they have to read any of these salacious books let them be read under the guidance of their parents or people who can give proper advice in the matter. In this connection I should like to read again from this brief:

A more direct but possibly more workable approach to the problem than outright censorship is the counter-attack. Many educators and librarians believe that an aggressive program to make alternative literature available to the reading public is a solution to the problem. They suggest that the undesirable literature be analysed to discover what elements in it appeal to people and that efforts be made to supply these elements in a more wholesome form.

I think that is common sense. While I am on the question of children's books I should like to say a word about the expense connected with obtaining these books. One reason why comic books are tolerated by many parents is the fact that they are so cheap. The comic strips appear in the daily or weekly newspapers and those particular pages are thrown to the children, somewhat as a bone is thrown to a dog. Children's books are quite expensive, as is anything that can claim the name of good literature. If