

*Criminal Code*

law, and that is so. After reading about what is taking place in the United States I have come to the conclusion that difficulties are being experienced in Congress there, just as the minister experiences difficulties here. Certainly, I hope we will go into this matter carefully when the firearms part of the bill is being considered by the committee. We must have regard for the laws as they now stand. Certainly with the increase in crime in this country the matter of firearms control is most important. We must scrutinize it very carefully.

There are some parts of the bill in respect of lotteries with which I cannot fully agree. I think I am correct in saying that under the present law lotteries could be held on occasion for charitable or religious purposes. I recall having a little trouble a few years ago in this regard. A lodge commenced to run a bingo, that well known indoor and outdoor sport in at least eastern Canada, and I think western Canada. I am sure even the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) has played bingo. The local authority felt that this was against the law and an action was commenced. In any event, the law in this regard has been in a questionable state. I hope the present legislation will clear up the doubt. Many organizations, including the Kinsmen clubs, as pointed out by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), sponsor bingo for charitable purposes.

Let me commend the minister for the measure in respect of harassing telephone calls. It has been my personal experience, since I have entered politics, that this type of call is becoming more prevalent. This has certainly been the case in my household. I hope in some way, as a result of this legislation, this type of thing can be stopped. I do not know how this can be done but I have read that telephone companies can trace calls. I do not know what might constitute evidence, but this is something that might be explained in the committee. I certainly support this part of the bill. I do not think any citizen, whether he be in politics or any other field, should be subjected to harassment through these calls. I know of this type of thing taking place, not only at my household but throughout my constituency. We will watch this necessary legislation closely.

The hon. member for Yukon and the hon. member for Calgary North spoke at some length about the matter of bail. I should like to refer to the matter of providing legal aid. I realize this is a costly proposition, yet in the

[Mr. MacEwan.]

province of Nova Scotia legal aid is being provided in one or two areas, including my own constituency. However, adequate provision is not made for legal aid. Many people come before the courts who are denied their rights, and not given the opportunity to defend themselves. I do not intend to mention any names, but I remember a pretty tough magistrate who grew up in the days when magistrates had to live on the costs they collected. These costs were directly related to the number of accused who either pleaded or were found guilty. After talking to some lawyers in my area, I discovered that on more than one occasion individuals who appeared before this magistrate without the benefit of counsel charged with fairly serious crimes were automatically sent on a trip to Dorchester penitentiary, even though it was the first time the individual had been before the magistrate. I think legal aid should be provided, and I hope that the federal government will give this matter some thought.

Officials of the province of Nova Scotia have discussed this matter and are undoubtedly in favour of providing legal aid. The provision of legal aid is costly but I hope something can be worked out between the federal and provincial governments. Canadians are entitled to be adequately defended before the courts. I am sure such a measure would receive the approval of the people of this country. The minister said in his opening remarks that he would be willing to make further amendments to our laws to keep abreast of the times. I hope he will give some thought to doing so in this regard.

● (3:10 p.m.)

As was pointed out by the Minister of Justice, some of the amendments really come under the Solicitor General (Mr. McLraith). The amendments with regard to the Parole Board are most interesting. In the justice committee not long ago we heard evidence from the Solicitor General and the chairman of the National Parole Board. At that time the chairman of the National Parole Board pointed out that in the nine years and ten months the board had been in operation, parole had been granted to 23,000 inmates and 89 per cent successfully completed their parole. That is quite a record. He further pointed out that it was necessary for him to have additional staff and more members of the Parole Board. I note this legislation does just that; it increases the membership of the Parole Board from five to nine.