

Criminal Code

Mr. Speaker: I suggest that the hon. member proceed with a discussion of the bill.

(Translation):

Mr. Denis: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and above all—

(Text):

Finally, Mr. Fulton said, "We are considering the possibility of including the printers of obscene publications in prosecutions, much more than is done today."

(Translation):

Here is the cause of all the trouble. To prevent the publication and distribution of these obscene books, the minister should have appealed to printers and publishers.

Yet, there is nothing in the present act likely to prevent printers and publishers from keeping on printing, publishing and distributing those immoral books either to wholesalers or to any other corporation in charge of their sale or distribution. I recognize that the minister wishes to find a solution to this problem. According to some press reports, it is a step in the right direction, and as was reported in another paper:

(Text):

"Better half a loaf than no loaf at all".

(Translation):

Therefore we will not object to this motion, but I would request the minister to take note of our remarks so that next year, if he still be the Minister of Justice, he will be able to profit by the remarks made by the members of the opposition. It is claimed that the government does not receive suggestions from the opposition. The trouble is that we offer too many of them and they do not know which one to take to be helpful to the population. They do not want the Liberals or the opposition to have the credit for the only pieces of legislation which can help the people.

Well, when the time comes to discuss this measure in committee, as was suggested by the minister—and by the way I thank Mr. Speaker, who was kind enough to let me make these few observations, a fact which enabled me to give to the minister a preview of the arguments which we will put forward when we study this bill in committee. I hope the minister will be better informed and in a better position to reply to the various questions directed to him by members of the opposition. And if, next year, if not this one, a better definition of the word obscenity is found, and if a better protection in regard to the possession of firearms is achieved, the whole country will be satisfied, even if the Conservative party should be given all the credit for that.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: I must advise the house that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on a number of occasions in the course of this—shall I call it debate—on second reading I shall be prepared to answer in detail and seriously any questions which have been raised when we reach the clauses in committee.

I have observed that most of the discussion thus far in this debate on second reading has been related to the provisions of the bill which deal with the definition of obscenity. I make no criticism of the fact, but I could not fail to note that the matter was treated with some levity, particularly by the hon. members of the Liberal party from the province of Quebec. I am not, of course, suggesting that the definition we have achieved is perfect. It is the best definition that we could achieve; it is an attempt to deal seriously with a serious subject. I think the house will be interested to note, and I think the country will be interested to note, and I think the province of Quebec particularly will be interested to note that members of the Liberal party from the province of Quebec treated this whole thing, with one exception, in an atmosphere of levity. As I say, I make no criticism of that. The hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Eudes) dealt with the matter seriously. The other members of his party from the province of Quebec, where I am aware that this matter is regarded with a great deal of seriousness, dealt with it as a subject deserving nothing but laughter.

Mr. Chevrier: That is not so, and you know it. All the minister has been doing is raising points of order.

Mr. Fulton: What I say hits my hon. friends a little hard but they recognize that their attitude towards this bill tonight has not done them credit, and that, of course, is a matter of which I am quite sure their compatriots will take notice. As I say, I make no criticism. Perhaps my hon. friends do not think the definition is very good. I shall be interested in hearing what they have to say in committee. My whole purpose in this debate has been to advance the bill along into committee so that we might hear what constructive suggestions my hon. friends have to offer, because certainly their attitude so far has been far from constructive. I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is really nothing more I need to say. I am quite certain that the house and the people of the country beyond the house will note the attitude of my hon. friends of the Liberal party toward a serious subject and a serious attempt to deal with a serious subject.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. McCleave in the chair.