

However, this being said, I think that the best forum for discussing those details would be the legislative committee and I hope Parliament will decide in a rather near future to defer it to such a committee where it will be submitted to a detailed consideration and will be improved as much as possible.

● (1230)

[English]

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, can I take it from the Hon. Member's last comment that he intends to vote against the amendment? If the Hon. Member has specific changes in wording to suggest, I wonder whether he could share them with the House. Are they changes which accord with out legal history and experience which would do the job better?

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I am not entirely clear what is Hon. Member's the question. If he is asking whether I support the NDP amendment, I made a fairly lengthy speech both today and on Friday explaining how I thought that proposition was unreasonable.

Notwithstanding the fact that perhaps we can disagree on the content of legislation, I think we are unanimous, or we should be, in agreeing that our constituents expect us to adopt an anti-pornography Bill.

The Hon. Member asks what specific wording should be included in the amendments. For instance, when we talk about the fact that promoters, importers and so on, of pornographic material will be penalized according to the present Bill in a similar if not identical way as someone operating a small corner store, renting a video cassette, and realizing a 50-cent profit, distinctions should be made in terms of penalty. That is a concrete example of a modification to the Bill which is possible.

I indicated to the Hon. Member that if our Party can obtain a number of such amendments to ensure that the Bill is a little more in tune with contemporary society and that other deficiencies in the Bill are straightened out at third reading stage, such as the penalty clauses to which I have just referred, then I for one would be prepared to support the legislation. If it has been amended in that way, it can be supported by the critic of our Party and by Members of Parliament generally.

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, I have a very short question for my hon. friend. I point out that the reasoned amendment of our justice critic which is before the House dealing with the Government's pornography legislation reads as follows:

That this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-54 because it fails to clearly define pornography as material that condones violence, coercion, abuse and degradation in its depiction of human beings or portrays or promotes the sexual exploitation of children; and also, because it does not distinguish pornography from material of an artistic, literary, educational or scientific nature in a fashion acceptable to the Canadian public, including artists.

I was somewhat surprised that my hon. friend said that he would not support that resolution. Surely the Government has

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gone too far and lacks a definition of pornography. A definition of pornography should include the kinds of concerns which are raised in our reasoned amendment.

Could the Hon. Member elaborate on why he fails to support the direction in which we have pointed?

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I will gladly respond to the Hon. Member's question. Notwithstanding the nine or ten lines of that "reasoned" amendment, one should remember that the two first lines read as follows:

That this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-54—

The rest of the amendment contains the details. The fact is that by adopting the amendment the House would kill the Bill. I say to the Hon. Member that Canadians expect us to pass a Bill. Yes, it needs to be improved. I agree with that. Let us bring it before committee and provide amendments which will make the Bill acceptable to a larger number of Canadians than it is now.

The original Bill—I guess it was Bill C-114—was totally unacceptable in my opinion. I feel that the one before us can be salvaged with amendments. Let us do it, let us send it to committee, and let us try to improve it. If we can improve it in a good and appropriate manner, I would like to vote in favour of the legislation at third reading.

It is not in a state now with which I would like to be associated. I indicate publicly that it needs to be improved, by voting against it at second reading, but I will not support an amendment which indicates that we should kill the Bill, because Canadians do not want us to kill the Bill and to forget about the issue. They want us to adopt legislation, and they expect us to do it now.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak today on the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) to Bill C-54, an Act to amend the Criminal Code. As we have been discussing, basically it deals with the very difficult issue of pornography.

First I should like to say personally that for about eight years I have been very involved in the particular issue as one—and I believe it is the case with probably all Members of the House—who finds violent and degrading pornography extremely abhorrent and unacceptable. I believe that most of us are attempting to focus on that area here.

Similarly, one could have no disagreement with provisions which attempt to deal with the very serious question of child pornography. As a former child welfare worker, I saw a number of situations which involved the exploitation of children. It was certainly one of the reasons that I worked on the issue and felt extremely emotional and strongly that something must be done.

Not only is violent pornographic material degrading to women, but it reflects a society that is not healthy, a society in respect of which many of us would not like to be a part. In terms of child pornography, certainly no one in this House