

Criminal Code

Refusal to divide this bill is like saying: you can have ice cream only if you eat your spinach. I suggest that 75 per cent of this bill is ice cream and the other 25 per cent is spinach. But we are grown up people, or at least I hope we are. We have been elected to come here and represent the people of Canada and I trust we are sufficiently grown up to be allowed to vote on these matters without compulsion, perhaps according to the way in which we have been brought up in the world. I am not saying my view is not affected by the fact that I am a Catholic. I do not intend to say that. But I do say the house should be allowed to vote on this matter free from the ties of party discipline or anything else.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that last year an amendment to abolish capital punishment came up for consideration. At that time the leader of the Liberal party in his wisdom allowed a free vote.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes, but they all voted for it.

Mr. Peddle: I don't care. The fact remains it was a free vote. And in this particular instance we are also dealing with human life, and I suggest the issue should similarly be determined on the basis of a free vote. I said at the outset that I did not intend to become emotional, and I do not. However, I feel that this bill is sufficient reason for any member of the house to become emotional. After all, are we considered to be idiots? The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) does not represent the conscience of the country; it is the 264 members who are elected to this place to represent the country who represent the conscience of this country. It is their vote that should decide. The Prime Minister should not try to impose his personal opinion on the people of Canada, because we in the opposition represent quite a number of the people of Canada.

• (8:40 p.m.)

I would call the attention of the house to the remarks made by the Prime Minister only yesterday at the opening of the constitutional conference. He said that the job of the new Fathers of Confederation was to change and to improve Canada; that over the years they have worked with patience, tolerance and foresight. Canada, said the Prime Minister, is the product of understanding, not conflict.

I should like to ask whether the type of legislation that is now before this parliament is consistent with the views of a man who does not want conflict. Is it consistent with

his view that there is a problem of national unity? In my opinion, from what I have seen since coming to this house, although some members of the house preach national unity they are more concerned with spreading the seeds of discord and disunity. Legislation of this sort, introduced at this particular stage of our history, is evidence of this fact. This legislation is not concerned with fostering unity but more with spreading discord and disunity.

I have already identified myself as a Catholic, and I will go further and say this: Speaking personally, and as a Catholic, I say that for the Prime Minister to go to Rome, then return to Canada and suggest we establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican is both mischievous and irresponsible. It is but one other example of this spreading of discord in Canada. I have seen so many examples of this kind since I have been in parliament that, in the words of the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), I wonder just what kind of government this is that insists upon assaulting the sensibilities of the Canadian people.

It seems to me that this government is involving itself in some weird kind of experiment with the Canadian people, and they are pushing as far as they can to see what happens. I am not seeking headlines. If I were, I would be standing up every day in this house and trying to get them. What I am concerned with is what is happening in this nation and in this parliament. Our Prime Minister and his government preach national unity and a just society. Although I have been here but a short time, I have seen no indication of any real concern for national unity. As I say, what I have seen is more an indication of concern for breaking up national unity. Every sign points in that direction.

I am not one of the Prime Minister's intellectuals, and God help me, I am glad I am not. I do not profess to be an intellectual. My basic conception is one of bread and butter—or if you want, meat and potatoes. I think that solves most of the problems of Canada.

I have listened to hon. members speak on this bill this evening, and one hon. member talked about drinking and driving. While I agree with what he said, in view of all the other matters dealt with in this bill I am surprised he confined his remarks to drinking and driving. Everybody knows that there will be almost 100 per cent agreement in this house on the question of drinking and driv-