

*Criminal Code*

The newspapers carried articles supporting abortion and condemning it, just as in the capital punishment debate some supported the idea of capital punishment and some were against it. In this house we tried to hang together so that we would not be hanged individually. But with this legislation we ought to try to cure a social ill that seems to beset most of the world. Actually we have been blowing up a tempest in a teapot and arguing about something that is not before parliament. The point is that we shall have to bring about social changes.

This bill was not originated by the Minister of Justice. He inherited it from the previous minister of justice. Actually, it has been kicking around for a long time. I hope the minister will be examining the legislation to see how it can be brought into line with current thinking on social issues. You know, there is a saying that if the law is bad, enforce it and it will be changed. Well, certain acts that are not performed in public are hard to control. The laws relating to homosexuality have not been enforced severely. Although these laws lend themselves to many abuses they have not been pressed because homosexual acts are conducted in private, and therefore remain a private matter. It is, therefore, true to say that we must speculate to some extent about the area in which social change must be brought about. As members of parliament we are dishonest if we do not face social problems squarely and try to solve them. I predict that within two or three weeks after this limited legislation has been passed a young lady in one of the large cities will die in one of the abortion mills of the country. You can argue all you like about life and the taking of life, and there are some very nice arguments from the point of view of conscience. There are nice arguments ecclesiastically; they are great arguments in theory. But the practical fact will be that women will be dying in abortion mills that are openly run in this country. I say that because even social workers are sending women every day to these abortion mills. If we do not correct the situation by adequate legislation, then each and every one of us will be responsible for the deaths of these women.

I suggest it might be a good exercise if once in a while we held a referendum in this country on simple questions such as the constitutional responsibility for education, or something like that. I think members of parliament would find that the average Joe does not care a hoot about who has jurisdiction in

[Mr. Peters.]

that field. It might surprise many here to see the results of referendums.

In closing, may I remind hon. members of what happened when two or three of us in this house carried on a campaign to broaden divorce laws. Many hon. members opposed that broadening. They said they could not support the concept in all conscience. Yet, looking around me now, I see there are hon. members who, while first saying they disagreed with the concept of broadened divorce laws, later voted for the measure. Why do some hon. members not take the position of some of our churches, the representatives of which have said to us, "Our people cannot take advantage of broadened abortion legislation, even if the legislation is broadened to a ridiculous degree, because their consciences will not permit them to do so. On the other hand, we do not wish to stop others who are not so inhibited by their consciences from taking advantage of the change."

Some hon. members who have not felt too strongly on these matters will, I hope, nevertheless make representations to the Minister of Justice. We need changes not only in the field of abortion but in other fields also in order to enhance Canada's reputation and in order that social problems may be corrected by legislation instead of being ignored. I think we will be surprised, as every hon. member from the province of Quebec was surprised, to find that when we finally make the change, there is absolutely no reaction from the people from whom we expected the most reaction.

• (9:50 p.m.)

**Mr. D. R. Tolmie (Welland):** As Chairman of the Justice Committee which studied Bill C-150, I would like to make some observations of a general nature. I congratulate the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner). He attended before our committee and in my opinion did a most admirable job. He was courteous and most knowledgeable. I also commend the officials who attended before the committee. They made a real contribution. I should not miss the opportunity of also congratulating the members of the committee.

When we first had this bill placed before us, many of us felt we would be faced with a long and tedious chore. I can assure the house that the members of this committee worked diligently, were most knowledgeable and worked in the interests of the Canadian people. I feel the committee system at this particular time was on trial. I know the test was passed superbly. The members worked