

Criminal Code

fine-toothed comb to find out exactly where the legislation does not follow through on those principles.

Shortly after the parliamentary secretary introduced the bill to the House in which these principles were outlined, I sent a survey containing four questions to my constituency. I will read the questions to the House. I tried to be impartial although it is sometimes hard to be impartial. I tried not to solicit an answer one way or the other. The first question I asked was:

Bill C-53 will repeal Sections 155 and 156 of the Criminal Code of Canada; and if passed, charges for buggery and bestiality would have to be laid under gross indecency and not per se for the said acts. Do you agree?

Normally I receive 2,000 or 3,000 answers, but perhaps because it was during the summer I only received a little over 800 responses. Out of those, 36 per cent agreed that it was all right to do away with charges of bestiality and buggery and put them under gross indecency, 57 per cent said no, they did not agree, and 8 per cent were undecided. I think that speaks for itself. Why do we want to eliminate the actual charges of buggery and bestiality to make it sound like something nicer under gross indecency?

● (1600)

I do not think we should be encouraging that type of behaviour. If it is done in private, under the Criminal Code today it is nobody's business; but what we are talking about is when it is not done in private but in a public way or in a semi-public way. I really cannot accept the argument that we should eliminate charges like that and put them under a nicer sounding heading such as gross indecency. That does not sound too nice, but certainly nicer than buggery and bestiality.

The second question was:

Bill C-53 changes Section 158 of the Criminal Code, which concerns gross indecency, by reducing the age of consent from 21 to 18 and by expanding the concept of privacy to allow for more than two participants. Do you agree?

This might be an orgy of some kind. The number of people who agreed was 53, 65 said no and 3 were undecided. That is not quite as definite as the one before, but again I think we have to take a careful look at what we are doing with this bill.

The third question was the following:

Bill C-53 repeals Section 158(2) of the Criminal Code, thereby permitting certain acts to be done in a public place, provided that they are done "in private". Do you agree?

The number who said yes was 33, 108 said no and 8 were undecided. However, the majority said this should not go ahead.

My fourth question was the following:

Do you agree with Section 167 of Bill C-53 concerning sexual misconduct?

The number who said yes was 53, 66 said no, and 25 were undecided. I think we have to take a careful look at whether some of the clauses in this bill follow the broad basic principles upon which the parliamentary secretary said the bill is based.

I suppose all hon. members have received printed cards like the one I have in my hand sent out by a number of people. It is not a postcard, it is a letter to Members of Parliament, and I

think everyone on all sides of the House has received these. This is what it says:

I wish to express my gratitude for the introducing of Bill C-53 to control child pornography and ease the pain of rape victims.

I think everybody agrees with respect to those items.

I ask, however, that it not be passed as introduced but that:

- 1) Sexual assault charged between spouses be prohibited.

I want to deal with that item for a moment. Many people are charging that this will put another nail in the coffin of the family unit. There are too many things today which make it difficult for family units to operate, and this item will certainly not help.

- 2) There be no lowering of the legal age of consent for sexual activities, homosexual or heterosexual.

- 3) That the prohibition of gross indecency be retained.

- 4) That there be retained a category of sexual assault or rape for forced sexual intercourse.

It is my belief that the changes proposed in these respects would result in increased government interference in the family, divorce, violence, juvenile delinquency, immorality, crime, welfare costs and a multitude of other hurts inflicted on individual members of our Canadian society and harm to our nation that it can ill afford at a time when an increase in their growth has already contributed to the near destruction of our homes and our once solid economy and a questioning of our future viability as a nation.

People do not take the signing of this type of card lightly. They have signed it because they are concerned about the direction we are taking and concerned about their children and grandchildren. Legislation which in any way lowers moral standards, reduces penalties for hideous crimes or condones things which are completely obnoxious to the majority of the people should not be supported. Let us set an example instead of giving way, as even some churches have done. Some think that if you do it often enough and enough people do it, it is all right. The next thing is that there will no longer be any such thing as sin and you can do anything you like if enough people do it. That is not the type of country we want. That is not the type of thing the men and women who are members of this House teach their children. They teach them high moral standards. They try to set an example, and our laws should set an example too.

I strongly urge that the government look again at the clauses in this bill which would lower standards and reduce penalties for hideous offences. Let us make sure we do not send a message out across this nation that anything is okay if enough people do it. Let us send out the message of a high standard of moral living so that we can all try to live up to it and achieve it.

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) is a very hard act to follow, but I am glad to be participating in this debate at second reading of Bill C-53.

Since we are dealing with the principle of the legislation, I would like to address my remarks to what will be achieved by this bill and, equally important, what will not be achieved if it is passed in its present form.