

Criminal Code

is my point. The Minister of Justice laboured the other day in an attempt to justify this measure, but I for one think he did a pretty poor job. Usually he is very convincing and persuasive, but in this case he was arguing against something which, in my opinion, he did not believe. One cannot do that and make it stick. That is what he was trying to do. He did not do as good a job as he usually does.

● (9:10 p.m.)

What do we do when we vote on this measure? We have to vote either yes or no. We must know what is the responsibility of the government in presenting a bill in this form. There are some items in the bill which are acceptable; for instance, those items in respect of safety on the highways. Nothing could be more important. There has been some mention of lotteries. I am not sure I have any strong views in this regard, but steps are being taken to deal with this situation and I have no doubt these steps are considered to be steps in the right direction.

Why should we wrap up all these measures together? I assume the government is trying to hide something. We are being asked to legalize homosexuality if we vote in favour of this bill. There is no question about that. We are being asked to put the stamp of respectability on something many of us do not feel is respectable. I, personally do not propose to do this and I am not going to vote for this section of the bill. I find no fault with someone who does vote in this way because that is an individual's right of choice. I cannot vote to place a stamp of respectability on something that is degrading and demoralizing to our people. I realize—

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) is rising to ask a question.

Mr. Broadbent: Would the hon. member permit a question, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Flemming: I do not think I should yield the floor.

Mr. Woolliams: Not to him, anyhow.

An hon. Member: Let him make his own speech.

Mr. Flemming: Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why the hon. member cannot make his own speech.

I have not dealt with the subject of abortion. It is my feeling that this is a difficult question in respect of which one cannot make a snap decision. I was impressed with the speech this afternoon by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin). Obviously he has made a great study of this matter. He cited various changes in words that could bring about a lessening of the restraint and respect for embryonic human life. I am sure everyone will acknowledge the importance of human life, whether it is embryonic or full-fledged.

This is a question which can best be answered by medical people. Perhaps members of this house can argue this question, but nevertheless it does involve a form of human life. I find it difficult to argue this subject because I have not given it the attention which I think its importance deserves. I do believe, however, that we must all acknowledge one fact. The government should have presented amendments to the Criminal Code in such a way that it would be possible for members of this house to give attention and care to these separate and important matters.

I listened to speeches by hon. members on the other side of this house who referred to the question of abortion. No doubt they felt they were justified in arriving at the conclusions they tried to put across. I find no particular fault, but I do say it is difficult to argue one way or another in view of the conflict that exists in the specific situations presented to the house this afternoon.

Let me content myself by saying I feel that the government is deserving of censure for the way it has presented this bill. It should have presented an amendment to the Criminal Code on an absolutely non-partisan basis, and in such a way that it could be examined by a committee. In this way, members would receive the advice of expert medical men and the opinions of experts from other countries which have made changes. All of these things could have been done had we concentrated on one thing at a time.

As a result of the way the government has presented this bill, the committee will be examining seven different things. According to the remarks of one member on the government side of the house, government members are told not to tamper with any bills before committees. That is what one member on the Liberal side has said. They have been told not to make any changes. What is the use of referring these matters to committees when members know that their efforts have been throttled before they begin? Those are not my