

Criminal Code

in the presentation of this bill, will consider it a privilege, as will I, to appear before the committee together with the officials of the Department of Justice.

May I say in conclusion that there is nothing immutable or unchangeable about the criminal law in this country. There is nothing infallible about parliament which enacts it. Reform of the criminal law should not be just a decennial tradition—not just once in ten years. I think reform of the criminal law should take place more frequently than that and more frequently than even just once each parliament. If in the light of experience any changes or additions to the Criminal Code appear not to have been in the public interest, they can always be changed or repealed at any time. Nor will I hesitate to bring forward any further amendments in the future whenever that appears to be in the public interest, as I subscribe to continuous legal reform.

The government intends to establish an independent national law reform commission having as its principal term of reference the continuous reform of federal statutes, giving us the ability as well to plan ahead in the development of our law. This commission will be independent of government and will be charged with an objective assessment of our law and its applications. We have established a research branch in the Department of Justice so that the justice side of the department will be just as effective as the Attorney General's side.

It is my hope that shortly after this bill has been dealt with I will be in a position to introduce another bill dealing with, among other things, wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping, pre-trial detention and bail.

I ask the members of this house to summon up their best collective judgment in the analysis of this complicated measure. Today all of us here embark once again upon that endless search for justice and for an understanding and compassionate system of law, perhaps falling short of the goal in our uncertain stumblings but always seeking the ultimate reach of the human heart.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I think I would be remiss in my duty and responsibility as the first speaker for the official opposition on this serious matter if I did not say that I listened to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) with great interest. I know he took great care in preparing his address.

I suppose this might be an afternoon when all the critics of lawyers might look upon us and say that they all have certain characteristics and to some degree are slightly charismatic. To take a personal approach for a moment, last year I noticed a comment in the *Globe and Mail*—someone drew this to my attention over the weekend—that I sometimes impersonate Perry Mason. I felt very deeply about that, a little touched and a little hurt. I am about the age of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), not a chicken or a boy. I have been practising law for 25 years. If Perry Mason appears to act like me then I suggest he has copied some of my methods over the years.

On the serious side, we have a motion before us that this omnibus bill receive second reading and be referred to the standing committee. The order of business reads:

Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of Bill C-150, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to make certain consequential amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Tariff and the National Defence Act.

Although I do not intend to do so now, at the conclusion of my speech I will move the following amendment, and I read it now to bring it to the attention of hon. members, particularly the spokesmen for other parties:

That the said motion be amended by adding after the words "National Defence Act" the following: "and the said standing committee be instructed to make and bring into the house four separate reports in relation to the following matters contained in the bill,

all clauses:

- (a) referring to abortion;
- (b) referring to homosexuality and gross indecency;
- (c) referring to lotteries and gambling; and
- (d) all the remaining clauses of the bill."

We say at the outset that the committee should be instructed under the new rules to bring in four distinct and separate reports on the matters I have set down in the amendment I intend to move at the conclusion of my speech. I realize and appreciate that I am treading on new ground. Under the new rules the philosophy and purpose behind second reading of a bill before the house are completely changed. Under the former rules governing the procedures of parliament the matter of principle was under consideration and discussion, and when the speeches were finished and the question was put the vote and decision of the House of Commons were made on the principle of the bill itself. In brief, when we considered the principle of