

Criminal Code

are subjected to cruelty in the name of medical and scientific research. I say that millions of pets are subjected to this cruelty. We do not know what the figure is in Canada, but the figures given to the Congress of the United States indicated that over 250 million animals a year were used in medical and scientific research in that country. We should do something about this, and I hope we do.

• (8:50 p.m.)

When I speak of cruelty to animals I also ask why something is not being done about the cruelty inflicted on those who became a little wayward, broke the law, served their sentence, never got into trouble again, and yet for the rest of their lives are condemned because of their one mistake. Why in this omnibus bill is there not a provision to correct this situation? Members of all parties have over the years, particularly in the last session, spoken in favour of a provision to wipe out a criminal record, or at least keep it secret, if a person has behaved himself for a number of years. But there is not one word about that in the bill. Hundreds, if not thousands, are paying the penalty for our incompetence.

Let me give just one example. There is in the city of Vancouver a man in his early sixties who, when he was 17 years of age, made a mistake. The mistake was such that he did not go to jail, although he was found guilty. He has never been in trouble with the law since that day; he has kept out of trouble from the age of 17 to his sixties. He is a brilliant man. He has to my knowledge risen to executive position three times, and three times he has been fired. Why? Because the executive position required him to be bonded, and the bonding company said: He has a criminal record and we will not bond him. Now, he drives a taxi. This is just one example.

There is a grave responsibility on our shoulders when we become members of parliament. It is not to just follow our religion and conscience but to understand and have knowledge then, having understanding and knowledge, to do what is right on behalf of the people of Canada. We hope this bill will pass, but that it will pass in an expanded form.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on Bill C-150 there are a few observations I should like to make on certain aspects of it. The matter of abortion has created great interest. It has created great interest for as many years as the problem has

been around, which is at least as long as recorded history. Arguments and opinions are firmly held by people both for and against this procedure. In the result, it seems to me that there are those who firmly hold that in conscience they cannot condone abortion under any circumstances because in their opinion life begins at the moment of conception, and therefore any interference with this natural process is wrong.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that the life and health of the mother is an important factor. If the life and health of the mother should be threatened, under certain circumstances the procedure of abortion should be carried out in an authorized, legal way. It seems to me that these two views, being firmly and sincerely held, are irreconcilable and that the conflict of ideas in this respect will not be solved by this bill any more than it has in the past.

In my opinion the provisions of this bill will not make abortion any easier in this country, although it may make it more available in certain parts of the country where heretofore hospitals in the area did not allow it. The laws on abortion have in the past been very obscure and so far as the medical profession is concerned have been the cause of some doubt. This bill will make the position of physicians more sharply delineated than previously.

At the present time abortions may be carried out in hospitals that allow them if the life and health of the pregnant woman are considered to be in danger. In practice this has meant that Catholic hospitals do not allow abortions, while non-Catholic hospitals have permitted them if they are carried out in accordance with their medical by-laws. The general pattern in the hospitals where therapeutic abortions are allowed is that an attending physician, in consultation with a duly qualified staff colleague, may decide whether a therapeutic abortion is to be performed.

In general, this practice seems to have worked fairly satisfactorily. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) has stated that no physician has been prosecuted for carrying out a therapeutic abortion. I think this indicates that the medical profession has discharged its duties in a responsible way. I would like to point out that hospitals have been quite strict in the application of this law. Furthermore, hospital accreditation and the attempt by the Medical Hospital Association to improve quality care in hospitals has resulted in a general change of attitude toward the problem and a