

*Criminal Code*

sacredness of life itself. I speak from my limited experience, not being a barrister or practitioner of the law. I speak as a parent, as the father of six children, and as one of a family of 15 children. I speak with all of the honesty I can muster. In doing so, it is my hope that other hon. members will speak in the same vein and will perhaps understand why there are those in this house who cannot find it within their conscience to support this bill. Regrettably the government, notwithstanding the views or the wishes of the present distinguished Minister of Justice, chose to present this bill in its present form including clause 18, which to many of us is repugnant.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, a good deal of the debate that has taken place regarding bill C-150 has revolved around the procedural situation in which we find ourselves. This was the crux, indeed, of the speech by the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat. He like others has complained that the bill is before us as one piece containing things that some members like and others that they do not like. I believe I can say that it is not my practice to let any government, Liberal or Conservative, put anything over on me procedurally. Whenever I have felt that the government of the day was trying to do something wrong by violating our practices or procedures I have said so in the clearest language I could use.

● (9:50 p.m.)

I want to say quite categorically that I do not think the practices of parliament are being violated by what is now before us, but rather some of the members who have been complaining about having to vote for this bill in one package will get a rude awakening when we come to a stage in our proceedings that was brought into effect by the rule changes we made just before Christmas. I thought that we debated those rules at considerable length. I thought that members were aware of what we were doing. But it seems to me that some members just do not realize what happened.

May I remind this house, and particularly those members who are still calling for the splitting of the bill, that we did two or three things about the legislative process when we altered the rules. First of all, although we did not in my view downgrade the second reading debate, we did downgrade the vote on second reading. We said: From now on at

[Mr. McGrath.]

second reading we are not voting for the principle of the bill as though it were sacred and not to be changed thereafter. We are merely voting to consider what is involved in this bill and to pursue it through further stages.

We decided, in fact, that the point at which an ultimate decision is taken should be later in the process, and therefore we upgraded the third reading vote and coupled with the words "that the bill be now read a third time" the words "and pass". But in between those two stages of second reading and third reading we instituted a report stage. That stage is a very important one and it will come into play on this very bill in a way which I think will answer those who have said that they are being treated unfairly.

What is going to happen? This bill, after it has had second reading, as I am sure it will, will go to the standing committee on justice and legal affairs. In that committee it will be considered clause by clause. Granted, only a handful of the members of this house will be there. If that committee makes no changes—for example, if that committee does not change the section with respect to abortion and it comes back to the house in the same form, members might say that was just a case of going through the motions. But when Bill C-150 comes back from the standing committee to be considered at the report stage, I ask hon. members to face what is going to take place.

Just as sure as I am on my feet tonight, there will be amendments moved by members. That will be done, as provided by the rules, to the clauses having to do with abortion, homosexuality, breathalyzer tests and half a dozen other things. Motions to amend the bill with respect to these particular subjects, these particular clauses, will have to be put to the house.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** As a whole.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Just a minute. These amendments will have to be put one at a time.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** To the house as a whole.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I am sorry; yes, to the house as a whole. If there are several amendments that are alike, Mr. Speaker will have the power to select which ones are to be placed before the house.