

Criminal Code

referred to a Royal Commission of investigation. We would then act as responsible citizens faced with a problem big with consequences for the future generations. I base this request on the serious considerations of doctors of the province of Quebec and those of the Canadian bishops. I leave for the consideration of hon. members everything that has been set forth.

• (8:30 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I know what I want to say on this bill. Whether I can say it to the understanding of hon. members or not is another question.

I understand, sir, that according to the new rules we do not debate the principle of the bill on second reading; the question before the house is, rather, whether or not the bill should be referred to the appropriate committee for further study. I have a few remarks to make on Bill C-150 and I hope I can keep them in this context. First, I want it to be remembered that we on this side of the house did try to introduce an amendment to the effect that the committee be instructed to bring in separate reports on several clauses of this bill. I do not recall whether this amendment was defeated or ruled out of order; in any case, it does not matter much.

I would have refrained from making any speech on second reading had that amendment gone through. As matters presently stand, one member, at least, has referred to second reading as "taking the bill on a little trip". Mr. Speaker, this bill will not go on a little trip with the help of my vote. I shall vote against it on second reading, third reading and any subsequent readings. I take this position because I see no reason why portions of this bill should not be considered separately, and members on the other side have produced no arguments to induce me to change that view.

I would remind hon. members that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), when introducing this legislation, virtually disclaimed any responsibility for the measure. Indeed, he was almost apologetic when he presented the bill to the house. He told us specifically that it was the Prime Minister's bill, and I do not doubt he repeated that three or four times—he repeated everything else he said three or four times. So, this bill is not going to take any little trip with the support of my vote, and I take this stand because along with thousands of other Canadians I want to see the measure split up.

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

I would remind hon. members that I do not take up their time by speaking merely for the sake of speaking. I am very careful about that. I speak only on matters I feel strongly about. Included in Bill C-150 are provisions in respect of several matters which touch our consciences. I may not be as able to express what I mean as are some of our legal friends; what I am trying to say is that these questions affect something deep down inside of us. I do not speak as a Catholic, or as a Protestant, or as a Liberal, or as a Tory, or as a lawyer, or as a doctor or anything else. Nothing like that. I speak as an ordinary human being who happens to be a Member of Parliament. We on this side have a free vote on this measure—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peddle: It has been decided that we on this side can vote absolutely freely according to our consciences. But there are 264 representatives of Canada in this house and when a majority of them are not permitted to vote freely on certain matters which affect their consciences, matters which affect convictions held deep in their own being, whether they are Catholics or Protestants, when there is a rule of government which forces them to vote as a block without regard to conscience or anything else, I think that is an insult to the Canadian people and to this parliament which represents them.

We should bear in mind that in a vast country like Canada there are all kinds of people—Catholics, Protestants, Jews and adherents of many other beliefs. For the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to seek to impose his particular belief upon members of this house when matters of conscience are concerned is, in my view, as I say, an insult to parliament, an insult to Canada, and something we cannot tolerate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peddle: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made a very pragmatic speech this afternoon. He did not say anything about abortion. He told us he wanted the provision relating to lotteries removed. How unfeeling can one be, Mr. Speaker? I am not speaking now, either against the motion or in favour of the motion. I am simply saying that if the Prime Minister cannot come to this house recognizing that on these matters each member has the right to vote according to his conscience, there is something gravely amiss.