

*Criminal Code*

of the provinces and the Attorney General of Canada (Mr. Turner). I heartily endorse this bill and urge the members of the house to vote in favour of it. It brings into effect many badly needed humanitarian reforms in the spirit of the just society.

• (4:40 p.m.)

It was inspired by our brilliant Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and drafted under his supervision when he was Minister of Justice. It was endorsed by the people during the last election and I therefore submit it is ready for serious consideration in committee, then speedy adoption.

The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) suggested yesterday that the bill be split. Splitting of hairs is not desirable. Many of the provisions in this legislation have already been studied by a committee of this house and I therefore consider that making those provisions the subject of separate reports could lead only to delay in their implementation. I am pleased the house has decided to leave the bill as one unit for discussion. I anticipate, with respect, that there will be unanimous agreement in the committee on many of these issues and that the controversial matters for consideration will be restricted to three or four only. These, it is true, will require time for patient study, and I am sure they will receive it in this house.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) complained that we on this side were delaying matters. The opposite is true. Speaking as one who has had 18 years of trial experience in the courts I believe, as, I am sure do other hon. members, that the wire tapping aspects of this legislation should be given careful consideration and that the necessary time should be accorded to such a study.

I commend the Minister of Justice on the able manner in which he spoke yesterday outlining the bill. In discussing some of the provisions I should first like to refer to the proposals in connection with firearms. I believe these provisions relating to firearms and defensive weapons will lead to a greater measure of public safety for the Canadian people. These are times of turmoil and strife, and it is a fact of life that assemblies and riots can take place unexpectedly, in unexpected quarters. I submit the wisdom and leadership shown by the Minister of Justice in bringing down this forward-looking piece of legislation is particularly apropos at this time.

[Mr. Gibson.]

With respect to driving offences, the spirit of the legislation before the house is summed up by the principle "if you drink, don't drive." The hazards of modern highways compel the exercise of strong control over drinking drivers. The government has had the courage to move in this direction. The presence in the bloodstream of .08 per cent of alcohol will henceforth be considered evidence of impairment. This is tough law, but it is realistic 20th century law in an age when cars are one of mankind's greatest dangers.

With respect to the question of conscience which a number of hon. members have raised, I submit it is hypocritical for anyone to suggest that this bill, or certain aspects of it, should be subject to a free vote. The Canadian people have already endorsed this legislation and it would be a mockery of democracy if the government were to wash its hands of responsibility and say: we shall leave this question to the consciences of individual members. The conscience of the people will be satisfied when the government carries out the mandate which was given to it on June 25 to bring in this forward looking legislation as speedily as possible.

In any event, I feel confident that most members of the house will support at least the greater part of the provisions contained in this omnibus bill. With respect to the proposals concerning abortion, I commend the Minister of Justice for introducing the provision that when the life or health of the woman concerned is in danger, abortion may legally be carried out. I feel strongly that the woman should be in control of this situation. I would go further, myself, and allow abortion on consent. However, I am prepared to support this bill as an important step forward toward the just society. I believe the bill is humanitarian in spirit and in fact, and that this country will be a greater country once this legislation has been passed.

Another significant amendment deals with harassing telephone calls. I am sure almost every member of parliament will be glad to see this clause enacted. The subject of cruelty to animals is also dealt with. These provisions appeal to the hearts as well as to the minds of all Canadian people and represent a forward step. The proposed restrictions on the publication of evidence adduced at preliminary inquiries bring to mind a number of trials which have been spoilt by injudicious publicity in the press.