

for these provisions, which I will read in a moment, is that they have to do with security, and that therefore the force is in some way on a military basis. But the actual fact is that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police now does the local police work for all but two of the provinces of Canada.

The proposed section 84 provides that every one who

(b) aids, assists, harbours or conceals a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police whom he knows to be a deserter or absent without leave; or

(c) aids or assists a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to desert or absent himself without leave, knowing that the member is about to desert or absent himself without leave, is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for six months or to both fine and imprisonment.

Now, can you imagine the outcry that would go forth in Canada if we were to apply this provision to the ordinary police forces of our Dominion? Yet you obligate a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to stay on his job for, five, seven, or ten years, whatever the enlistment period may be, irrespective of the treatment which is accorded him while he is there, and put in jail anybody who assists him if he deserts. It is wrong. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are a civilian force, and should remain such. We want no SS. Guard in Canada. There is no need to treat these men as though they were a Praetorian Guard to protect the lives of tyrants. They do nothing of the kind. They enforce the civil law of our country in, I understand, a quiet, efficient and very satisfactory way in those provinces where they have been given control, and there is no need to make them a military force, governed by military law and subject to military domination.

Just a comment or two on the proposed section 120 of the Code, which is contained in clause 7 of the bill. This is an attempt to prevent injuries and accidents resulting from the handling by young people of air-guns, firearms, air-pistols and the like. In my judgment the amount of damage done in this way is out of proportion to the value of these instruments involved. I welcome the new provision which restricts the sale of these instruments to young people; but it is confined to those under the age of fourteen and does not go far enough. According to our laws with respect to many things, the age of maturity is sixteen years, and I think that the age in this provision should be sixteen years rather than fourteen. A large part of the damage that is done by young people with these instruments is done by those from, say, fourteen to eighteen. That is the age group which does the most damage.

Hon. Mr. Reid: That is right.

Hon. Mr. Golding: And less than fourteen too.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Yes, I include the ones under fourteen; but most of the damage is done by those between the age of fourteen and the voting age of twenty-one. I should have liked to see this provision made to fit the usual age for young persons, the age for instance at which they are callable in the juvenile courts, namely, sixteen. The age of consent is sixteen.

Hon. Mr. Reid: The members of these young gangs are usually between sixteen and eighteen.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Yes.

Hon. Mr. Golding: Not all of them.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Not all of them, but those who are under fourteen are usually led and tutored by those who are between sixteen and eighteen. That is a minor point, but it illustrates my original statement that this legislation has not been given the consideration that is due to it.

Hon. Mr. Vien: Have any reasons been given why the age should not be eighteen instead of fourteen?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: No, not that I know of. I have heard of none.

Hon. Mr. Vien: Would the honourable senator be willing to move that this change be made?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I am tired of doing that kind of thing simply to have it voted down in this house; but I shall support my honourable friend from De Lorimier (Hon. Mr. Vien) if he desires to move such an amendment.

Section 7 of the bill has to do with the possession of weapons, and I should like to read subsection (3) of the new section 122. It says:

Every one who is an occupant of a motor vehicle in which he knows there is a firearm is guilty of an offence unless some occupant of the motor vehicle has a valid permit in Form 76 or Form 76B relating to that firearm.

Now, then, honourable senators, just imagine climbing into a motor bus and finding that somebody in that vehicle has a pistol in his hip pocket. Under this provision every one in the bus will be guilty of an offence. That is not what is really intended, but that seems to me to be the effect of this provision. I am all for guarding against injury and damage by the illicit use of firearms. I am as afraid of a gun as anybody. I can remember as a boy being taught that it was a sin to point a firearm, loaded or unloaded, at anybody.