

Criminal Code

us, but of a different colour, are suffering and often lose their life. And what about the millions of political prisoners exterminated by totalitarian regimes throughout the world. Those examples are the reflection of as many social problems which will not be solved by violence.

It is truly ironic to note the situation in our country as far as social legislation is concerned. Shortly after abolishing the death penalty—a measure which has put our country in first place among those that respect human life—we want to pass a legislation which will destroy life instead of protecting it.

Canada and the Canadian people have become champions of the oppressed, defenceless individual. This is the opportunity for us to prove it to the whole world.

It is unfortunate that the clauses concerning abortion and homosexuality have been included in the omnibus bill. Bill No. C-150 contains improvements which we approve and which we would have supported. However, we cannot accept the bill as it stands now, because it is a denial of the right to live and it would legalize violence.

We think that the clauses dealing with abortion should be deleted from the bill and studied in greater detail. The proceedings of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs show that different views are held on basic issues.

In my opinion, this evidence should have been taken into consideration and the matter studied more thoroughly.

Clause 195 does not mention that human life exists as of the time of conception, thus even before birth, and it is precisely that life which has to be protected. Considering life as an intrinsic value the proposed changes are therefore not acceptable. It is on these grounds that I say that some proposals contained in bill No. 150 cannot be accepted and that certain sections of our Criminal Code are not justified. That is why the bill is contentious.

Certain sections were drafted a long time ago and they come in conflict with today's scientific discoveries.

Bill No. C-150 lists a long series of changes relating to homosexuality, abortion, the prevention of cruelty to animals, the Customs tariff, the National Defence Act, etc. I skip some of them because it would be too long a list. The number of clauses contained in this bill is quite impressive and, as I am not a lawyer, such changes leave me quite perplexed.

[Mr. Rodrigue.]

I am of the opinion that in clause 387 we put too much emphasis on animals and birds. It would be better to consider with greater attention clauses 195 and 209, dealing with abortion, and clauses 147 and 149 concerning acts in private between husband and wife or consenting adults.

I think that the sections I have mentioned deal with different values and should be studied separately.

That is why, following the hon. members for Calgary North and Frontenac (Messrs. Woolliams and Dumont) I would like the committee to submit to the house different reports on each subject.

Moreover, I think that the subjects dealt with are of capital importance for the present as well as for the future of the whole population.

Therefore, it would be fair to grant each hon. member the right to vote freely, according to his conscience, and to take the decision he will think best for society.

[English]

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the time is quite ripe for an extensive consideration of the many specific aspects of this bill's very comprehensive provisions. The bill is going to receive detailed consideration by the standing committee, and no doubt throughout the sittings of the committee the minister will be extremely interested in the committee's deliberations. It is really only at the report stage, when the bill comes back from the committee, that we can give it complete consideration. In light of some of the remarks that have been made in the house, not only by members on the other side of the house but also on this side of the house, with regard to some of the aspects of this bill I thought it appropriate to make a few comments.

Much has been said, particularly by members on the other side of the house, about law reform, and I cannot concur more with the suggestions that have been put forward from many quarters. I think the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) and the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith) are to be complimented in that this bill represents a great step toward the reform of many aspects of our criminal and penal law. In my opinion the criticism of our present parliamentary system that we are failing to keep pace with the demands of modern Canadian society is a valid one, and this is particularly so in the field of criminal law