

*Criminal Code*

reason, I protest the presentation of the bill in its present form.

Let us just read the motion which is before us:

—motion of the Minister of Justice for the second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of Bill C-150, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and to make certain consequential amendments to the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Tariff and the National Defence Act.

If there ever was a bunch of hash all put together in one package, this is it. Then, the minister has the effrontery to sit here and smile about it, as if it were something we should enjoy. Not only do I not enjoy it but I find a good many things about it entirely unacceptable. Our leader this afternoon informed the house that so far as our party is concerned, the vote will be free. I listened very intently to various speeches made in connection with this bill because I consider it a very important one and something which should not be decided quickly.

I heard the opinion advanced by some members that we should vote for the bill because of some of the good things contained in it. I find myself inclined to vote against it because of the bad and undesirable things contained in it. That is my reaction. The purpose of the bill is to legalize certain things which I submit are demoralizing and degrading. I refer especially to homosexuality. I should like to ask the minister whether, before this debate is concluded, he would inform the house what the practice in past years has been when amendments to the Criminal Code have been submitted to the house. I would wager, Mr. Speaker, that such amendments have always been presented as amendments to the Criminal Code and have not been wrapped up with a lot of other things. That is my opinion, although I have not looked up the previous procedure.

Surely, the members of this house are able to deal with such questions on a non-partisan basis, on a basis which they are convinced will result in the well-being and general good of the people of Canada. Surely, that is a proper approach. In dealing with something as important as amendments to the Criminal Code, why should we not deal with amendments to the Criminal Code only? Instead, we find these amendments wrapped up with the various other statutes which I have just mentioned, including the Customs Tariff. What is the relationship between the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff?

[Mr. Flemming.]

In presenting the bill as it has, the government has left itself open to the charge that since there are so many things in one package there must be something to hide. I submit the procedure is capable of that interpretation. Therefore, whether that is or is not the case, I am sure all members will consider they should examine the bill with great care.

I am not speaking about the bill from a legal point of view or from a therapeutic medical point of view. I am just dealing with this matter as an ordinary citizen of Canada. I object to having our Criminal Code amendments wrapped up with a lot of other things which certainly have no connection whatsoever with the Criminal Code. I submit that the government is deserving of the censure of the house for having presented the bill in this form.

I speak from the standpoint of what I believe may contribute to the improvement of the general moral tone of our people; I speak from the viewpoint of conscience, if you like. Certainly, I am a person who has no reason to advance an argument concerning why a person's approach to a decision of this nature should not be made in the light of his conscience. There certainly is nothing wrong with that. I believe our effort should be to improve things, to restrain evil and to contribute to the well-being of all our people. So, I object to the mixing up of these amendments with other statutes.

We are still considering second reading and referral to a committee. Well, the approval of second reading has been approval in principle, and I presume still is. This afternoon the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), to whom I listened with great attention and who I believe deserves a lot of credit, asked for a free vote. So do I, and that is what we in our party are going to get. The feature in the bill to which I particularly object is the homosexuality feature, because I do not think that anything that degrades the moral tone is good legislation.

I know hon. members might argue that it is necessary to do something because homosexuality is already being practised. But that same argument could apply to murder because murder is not non-existent; it could apply to stealing; it could apply to many things which come under the Criminal Code. So, if one wanted to argue, he might say that we must legalize stealing, we must legalize perjury, we must legalize murder because there are occasions when they are practised. I submit the fact that they are practised is no reason to place the label of respectability on them. That