

*Criminal Code*

It was also my good fortune to participate in the deliberations of this house over a number of years when we finally brought divorce legislation into a social atmosphere. This allowed the government to pass a bill which was more progressive than the one I proposed.

**Mr. Gibson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I submit that the hon. member has strayed from the subject matter of this bill. Surely, he is not discussing anything of relevance to this bill.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry for new members who have not yet had the opportunity of learning the rules. Given enough time they will sooner or later learn these rules, providing they keep trying. In any event, appreciate the interest of the hon. member.

The point is that individual members of parliament should be given a great deal of credit for introducing legislation which has not been popular and sometimes dangerous. When I presented the bill to which I referred I showed it to members of the press in order to get some comment. This bill proposed amendments to sections 147 and 149 of the Criminal Code having to do with buggery, bestiality and gross indecency. I suggest this was the forerunner of the amendments which later related to the homosexual sections we are now considering.

The provisions of my proposed amendments would have had the effect of not applying sections 147 and 149 to acts committed in a place other than a public place by one person with another person, each being 21 years or more of age or married and who consented to the commission of the act. There was considerable comment about this amendment.

At about the same time I became associated with a number of religious leaders, and because of my experience at that time I am shocked by some of the comments of hon. members who think they know something about religion. This organization in Ottawa was representative of the Catholic church, the United Church, the Anglican church, a number of homosexuals, several doctors and psychiatrists. At that time the organization was known as the Canadian Council of Religion and the Homosexual.

These religious leaders were interested in these people because they were aware of the fact that in Ottawa homosexuals make up more than 10 per cent of the population. They realized they were losing members of their

congregation every week, and as religious leaders they were unable to assist these people who were obviously in need of some kind of help. I was only one of many individuals who joined this organization. I did so because I believed that homosexuality was abnormal and that these people required help.

I think I can safely say that I came from an environment in which men were men, and women were glad of it. I might say I spent most of my life reminding them of it.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Peters:** And we were glad that they were glad of it. We believed that homosexuality was abnormal and that it was something these individuals had no control over, but something in respect of which they could use help. I was joined in this feeling by many people of the religious community who were aware that many people in the community faced this problem.

Many members of parliament have said they could not accept this amendment because their faith would not allow them to do so. I suggest many of them have not considered their faith since they were 13 years of age. I have heard some arguments about divorce, and I asked the late Mr. Favreau how many letters he received after we passed the divorce legislation. Do you know how many adverse letters he received? He received absolutely none. Why? Because the people concerned with theology are up to date in theology. It is not the theology we learned as little boys; it is the theology of today, and as the times change even theology and churches change. If members of parliament go to church once in a while they will find there has been change in this respect and there is no longer a dog-in-the-manger attitude all the time.

• (9:30 p.m.)

This matter of homosexuality affects all members of parliament. We remember an unfortunate case not too long ago that affected one of our members. What happened? I do not know what he did, and I do not even care. He put himself in a position where he was subject to blackmail, the abuse of the courts and the abuse of politicians, and he is no longer with us. I do not know what the background of this case was.

I expected when I joined this organization that we would be able to sit down with psychiatrists, doctors and others familiar with this situation and find there was an easy cure perhaps we could give somebody a shot of hormones and change that person from one