

Saguenay (Mr. Dorion) and the hon. member for Lake St. John-Roberval (Mr. Dion). I have already expressed my views on divorce during the last session. I believe that all hon. members in this house should leave no stone unturned to prevent this undesirable increase in the number of divorces in Canada.

(Text):

Motion agreed to on division and bills read the second time.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA TELEPHONE COMPANY

On the order:

Second reading of Bill No. 59 (Letter G of the senate) intituled: "An act respecting British Columbia Telephone Company."—Mr. Reid.

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, would the sponsor of the bill this evening explain it to the house? This bill originated in the other place, and when it was read in this chamber for the first time there was, of course, no explanation. Unless the sponsor this evening is prepared to give an explanation of it, I think the bill had better be left over until the hon. member for New Westminster, whose name is on the bill, is present.

Mr. W. H. GOLDING (Huron-Perth): In view of the fact that the hon. member for New Westminster is absent at the present time, and I know that he is familiar with all the features of the bill, I would suggest that the bill stand.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stands.

#### SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 73, respecting the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway Company.—Mr. Cleaver.

Bill No. 106, to incorporate Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway Company.—Mr. Rinfret.

#### PENITENTIARY ACT

##### INSPECTION OF PENAL INSTITUTIONS BY GRAND JURY, ETC.

Mr. T. L. CHURCH (Broadview) moved the second reading of Bill No. 12, to amend the Penitentiary Act, 1939.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the object of this particular bill is to allow the grand jury in each of the provinces to visit these federal institutions twice a year and to make a presentment in the public interest. It is no way to be taken as a criticism of the existing system of official inspection. On the contrary, the object is to assist in the satisfactory administration of these institutions.

In the first clause of the bill there is provision that the grand jury may inspect penitentiaries and make presentment, without cost to the country. It is one of the cardinal principles of magna carta that the people should take a large share in the administration of criminal justice. These institutions, whether they are rightly or wrongly managed, are managed by crown officials; and to carry out the principles of magna carta it is available to have the grand jury go into these institutions. At the present time what is the inspection? There is no inspection at all except by crown officers, some of whom have had no training for the work. They learn only by experience.

In the next place, there are many complaints. We seem to have made no progress in this work over the last thirty or forty years. Men are shut up in small cells or in cages against all the known laws of public hygiene. Some of these provincial gaols and prisons in the cities and towns of Ontario and in other parts of the country were built before confederation against all the known laws of public or private hygiene and public health, and the result of that can be seen. In another case the jury visited an institution in one of the cities in Ontario and found some men who had been quite sane incarcerated in an asylum. How are the public to know? The cost of these institutions is going up by leaps and bounds. From the report here the number in these institutions is increasing, especially among those not of age, and it is a serious social and economic problem. I hope that the new minister will see to it that the first clause of this bill is adopted. I remember when the late Chief Justice of Ontario, R. M. Meredith, on circuit for forty years, and an able judge, was addressing the grand jury of the county of York, he suggested that it would be in the public interest that in each of the cities or towns of a province the jury should be allowed to go into these federal institutions twice a year, and he said he was anxious to remedy some of the crooked paths in the administration of justice.

The next clause of the bill relates to a matter which has been recommended, I think, to the Department of Justice, especially in important cases, namely, permitting the visiting, under escort, by prisoners to dying relatives.

The third clause relating to offenders under the age of nineteen is one of the matters which should be taken up immediately by the provinces and the Borstal system adopted at once.

There are one or two others who are to speak on this bill. I do not see the minister present at this time, but I do not like to move