

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 20, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1984

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C-18, an Act to amend the Criminal Code, to amend an Act to amend the Criminal Code and to amend the Combines Investigation Act, the Customs Act, the Excise Act, the Food and Drugs Act, the Narcotic Control Act, the Parole Act and the Weights and Measures Act, to repeal certain other Acts and to make other consequential amendments, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, before we begin debating the substance of the Bill, I wanted to ask, as a matter of order, whether the Government is prepared to separate out the drunk driving provisions so that they could be enacted before—

Mr. Speaker: That may well be a matter for negotiation between the Parties, but I really do not think it is a point of order, with respect. I therefore recognize the Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie).

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, in starting the debate on second reading of this Bill I might say that the situation has not changed since yesterday. The Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) heard me say yesterday, at a press conference which he attended, that I am hopeful that this Bill will go through the House as a whole. There is nothing in it which is strange or startling compared to last year. Most of these provisions were introduced last year in a Bill known as C-19.

We are prepared, of course, to consider that the Opposition is obdurate and for some reason does not want to pass the Bill as a whole. As far as I can see, the provisions in this Bill are largely non-controversial. They are provisions that were introduced last year. The more controversial aspects of the Bill that was introduced last year have been removed. Many of them will be back in the House in further legislation which I hope to introduce in the next session.

I hope to persuade the House that the proposals now before it are not controversial or strange or in any way dangerous to

the public will. I am hoping that the whole Bill will go through because all of the provisions of the Bill are needed. However, if it appears that it is going to take a long time or there is some great difficulty, we are prepared to consider other arrangements. This Bill is not just concerned with impaired and drunken driving. There are many other good provisions changing the law in this Bill that need to be passed by the House. I do not think that we should fasten on only one aspect of this Bill.

I would like to indicate at the start some of the provisions of the giant Bill introduced last year that are not included in this Bill. We have removed from the Bill the areas dealing with sentence reform. Last year's Bill was a 306-page Bill. This is a 172-page Bill. The area of sentencing reform is going to be dealt with in 1985.

I hope to deal with the area of obscenity and pornography when we introduce legislation in February or as early in the year as possible. The area of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution will be dealt with in amendments which will be introduced next year.

The area of contempt of court, which was quite controversial, particularly with respect to the judiciary, will be dealt with. There are going to be changes there. I think some of the objections that were put forward by members of the judiciary with reference to those proposed changes had to be considered and dealt with, so that will be dealt with next year. The question of changes with respect to jury trials is another area which I propose to leave until next year.

In the Bill before the House, which I will be describing for the next few minutes, are areas which are largely non-controversial. There are provisions to deal with computer crime. There are provisions to deal with search and seizure to ensure that that area of the law complies with the Charter of Rights and court decisions. In this Bill we are dealing with international conventions which relate to the proliferation of nuclear material. We are dealing with provisions that enable us to carry out our responsibilities under the International Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. In addition, there are provisions in the Bill which deal with enabling us to carry out our responsibilities under the Convention to Facilitate the Prevention, Prosecution and Punishment of Acts of Hostage Taking.

This is not just a Bill to deal with impaired driving. It is a Bill to deal with many important areas of the law that need to be changed at the moment, including hostage taking and drug control. There are provisions in this Bill to deal with controlling the medical use of narcotics and controlled drugs.