

*Criminal Code***PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT
MOTION**

[Translation]

QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave)—Agriculture; the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Transport; the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser)—Labour conditions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1710)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1977

AMENDMENTS TO CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Basford that Bill C-51, to amend the Criminal Code, the Customs Tariff, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act and the Prisons and Reformatory Act, be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-51 now before us entitled Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1977, may not be the most intelligent one introduced by the government but it could go through history as the bill with the longest title and the most mixed provisions. As far as I am concerned it is a hotchpotch not to say a rotten bill. Here is its title: "An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Customs Tariff, the Parole Act, the Penitentiary Act and the Prisons and Reformatory Act."

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing here with an omnibus bill, that is, a bill which includes amendments to a number of acts in various areas and which are connected only by the will of the minister who sponsored this bill. The minister could have included as well amendments on tomato growing, which the House would not have found particularly surprising. I have heard with interest the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) suggest that the bill introduced by the minister should be divided into several bills, so that following the debate on this bill, hon. members should not be called upon to vote at the same time on provisions of which they approve and on provisions of which they disapprove.

Yet, this is exactly what is going to happen following the decision the Chair has rendered on the basis of established precedents. I understand quite well why the government will not introduce distinct bills for each and every amendment it wishes to adopt in respect of existing legislation. It has chosen

[Mr. Speaker.]

this quite legitimate approach and refuses to introduce useless bills, because it wants to spare the House's time and resources.

Mr. Speaker, I feel, however, that the government should demonstrate judgment and good sense and avoid placing hon. members in a difficult situation. I know the Chair had no other choice but to accept the legislation as put forward by the minister since it is bound by precedents. However, I think the Minister of Justice could have remembered his experience with Bill C-83, when several members had protested against the fact that the bill included all kinds of things, and I think he has missed a good chance of showing members on both sides of the House his honesty and his willingness to co-operate with all the elected representatives of the people.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, this legislation the consideration of which we are about to conclude is nothing but the bastard offspring of Bill C-83 about which so much ink had been spilt and which had given rise to such an amount of criticism everywhere across the nation and especially with hunting and fishing organizations, and groups like the Wildlife Federation. Last year, I had the opportunity of working in close cooperation with those organizations. I was very proud when the government gave up trying to have the bill passed during the last session. For me, as well as for all those concerned by individual freedom, the death of Bill C-83 was a great victory. The hunters of northwestern Quebec who represent a major part of my constituents welcomed with relief the government's decision not to pass that bill, particularly not to force its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I probably have the greatest number of hunters among my constituents than any other member. I thus consider myself as the spokesman of all hunters and all nature lovers when I speak on this matter. My constituency, Mr. Speaker, is an immense territory full of game of all kinds and my fellow citizens take advantage of this unique chance to live close to nature. This exceptional geographical position is known by thousands of tourists who come to our area during the hunting season. So I know what I am talking about when I point out the concerns of hunters and nature lovers about Bill C-51. Obviously, the minister cannot say as much. He looked clearly astonished, during the sittings of the committee on Bill C-83, on hearing the specific and logical representations of the groups which appeared as witnesses against those elements of the bill that clearly interfere with the rights of the citizens. Mr. Speaker, I said at the time, and it still applies today, that the minister knows so little about the concerns of those who live in rural areas, close to the woods, that he probably would have a hard time telling the difference between a fir tree and a telephone pole.

Mr. Speaker, on this the last reading of Bill C-51, I shall dwell strictly on that part of it that deals with the control of firearms, as other hon. members have spoken and will speak about the other aspects of the bill. I shall use up my time to convey to the minister the concerns and worries of hunters and ordinary citizens in my riding as well as the rest of Canada. In his speech on May 11 last, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Basford) averred as follows, and I quote: