

*Criminal Records*

a great disappointment; it has not incorporated the recommendations that have already been made by the committee.

How are committees of the House of Commons formed? The justice committee is probably fortunate in that it is made up of professional people. It is a pretty independent committee and does on occasion make recommendations that are contrary to the policy of the executive. However, if our recommendations are to be ignored, we might as well lock the door of the committee because we are just wasting our time.

If, under this new presidential system, the executive is to take the position that any recommendation made by a committee is all right as a recommendation, that members of the House who are very able are to be kept busy attending committees and studying subjects, but that their recommendations are to be put by the minister into the filing basket and he thereupon comes forward with a bill that is recommended by his own advisers, we are wasting our time. In view of what the chairman of the committee said tonight, what will be the position if the committee makes certain recommendations in regard to this bill? Will the minister come back to the House and tell us that the bill will go through, no matter what the committee has recommended? In the justice committee there are a number of backbenchers who are able professional men, just as able as the minister.

**Mr. Deachman:** Able men on both sides of the House.

**Mr. Woolliams:** I am glad the hon. member said both sides of the House. But are we to be merely rubber stamps? If the minister is going to bring in his own bill anyway, then as I see it the committee is wasting its time.

There is a very simple procedure for dealing with this situation. What we should do is to go through, as we are tonight, the sham of second reading of the bill and send it to the committee. No longer does the committee of the whole House study each clause of the bill. The standing committee can waste a few hours for each of two or three weeks studying the clauses and making recommendations to the minister. If the minister, in spite of the remarks made by the chairman of the justice committee tonight, is not prepared to accept the recommendations of his own chairman, a man who doubtless had the approval both of the minister and the Prime Minister, then he is setting himself up as a little tin god. He

[Mr. Woolliams.]

will be a member of an executive that is going to run to the country its way no matter what the members of the Liberal Party of the opposition say.

• (9:50 p.m.)

This emphasizes once again the waste of time of committees. If the government wants to keep its backbenchers busy—and they are getting wise to this—on projects such as contained in this bill, I hope it will not think we are naïve enough over here that we will be engaged in this kind of project which does not lead to fruition as far as reform of the Criminal Code is concerned.

The recommendation I make is the same as that of the hon. member for Welland. If we are to have effective reforms in respect of those who run afoul of the law so far as the Criminal Code is concerned and are sentenced to penitentiary where they are fingerprinted and catalogued, having served their incarceration and after another five years we should be able to expunge the record and let that man or woman start over again.

I should like to express one last thought. I ask the minister to reconsider his position. I hope when he comes before the committee he will be able to accept the unanimous recommendations of the committee and agree to amend the bill. We will then feel that the committee is doing something and functioning properly, and that the minister and the executives are actually listening to Members of Parliament rather than just running this country as little tin gods and dictators.

**Mr. Hubert Badanai (Fort William):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on Bill C-5 which, when passed, will provide relief for persons who have been convicted of offences and subsequently have rehabilitated themselves. However, not being a lawyer like those who preceded me, I am not going to deal with the technicalities of the law but rather with the compassion that this legislation will rouse in the hearts of men.

I have a special interest in this bill because a member of my family has been very active in the work of the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies of Thunder Bay. It is a bill, as was pointed out by the Solicitor General (Mr. McIlraith), that is an honest attempt by the government to bring forward legislation that will deal with the aspect of rehabilitation of persons who have been convicted of an offence and have subsequently