

Criminal Code

sentence as a possible sentence for the offences set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of section 364 of the code.

While I am on my feet may I say that the whole nature of this bill serves to emphasize the responsibility which society places upon the employees of the Post Office Department, and the necessity that these employees should be people of character and integrity. I want to compliment the Post Office Department and its employees upon the degree of responsibility and integrity which has been manifested in that department in the past. I just wish to say that that degree of character and integrity required of the employees of the Post Office Department is in strong contrast with the reward which society, through that department and the government, has been willing to pay to these employees; and I would suggest that this bill, which in one instance at least imposes a severer penalty than the former one upon the employees for a certain type of offence be accompanied later, when the minister's estimates come up for consideration, with the announcement that these employees are to be duly rewarded in keeping with the responsibility which we place upon them.

Mr. A. G. SLAGHT (Parry Sound): I agree with the last speaker (Mr. Noseworthy) it is important that we should maintain in the public mind the necessity for the strictest probity in those who serve us in dealing with His Majesty's mail. There is an old tradition that His Majesty's mail must go through, and accompanying that is the tradition that that great arm of the public service, both the officers and the mail carriers, must comprise men of high integrity. In my view, in Canada these men are men of integrity. In my view, in the main, particularly as regards the carriers, they are underpaid. That is one of the problems not for to-day but for the future. If that be so, the frailty of human nature inclines men to err when tempted possibly in the matter of \$2 or \$5 which might be needed and which might cause them to break the country's laws.

Having said that, I desire to concur in the observations so well put by my hon. friend the member for Essex East (Mr. Martin), and I think the minister will find that they meet with the general approval of the house. I desire, Mr. Speaker, to adhere to your ruling to discuss the principle of the bill and not to speak as though we were in committee.

The principle of the bill is not such as the leader of the opposition (Mr. Graydon) suggested in error. He suggests that we are making a new start. We are not making a new

[Mr. Noseworthy.]

start, because the section we are amending provides for imprisonment for life, but places a minimum of three years. So far as the principle of the bill removes that minimum of three years I think it is sound. In so far as it seeks to perpetuate the right to punish with life imprisonment, I do not think the principle is sound.

The administration of our criminal law is the very foundation of our national existence, without which we cannot hope to succeed, and that administration depends upon the observance of a principle which a great English judge once enunciated: Not only shall justice be done, but the people shall feel that justice is being done. Having regard to that principle, I am bold enough to make a suggestion to the minister who takes the keenest interest in these matters. By his equipment before accepting this responsible post, as well as by reason of his record, he is well fitted to stand in this great and responsible position as Minister of Justice, and I wish to pay tribute to his record in that regard, as well as to his record since he has occupied the position. I venture, however, to suggest to him that when he comes to the committee he might feel inclined to suggest an amendment to the section which deals with section 364 and to reduce the term of imprisonment there by striking out the words "for life" and substituting words such as "for not more than", let us say, "eight years", or "seven years" or "five years"—some punishment that fits the crime. I suggest that he amend section 2, which deals with section 365, by reducing the term from seven to perhaps five years. My suggestion would be—and I offer it with diffidence, because this is a very open matter—that he amend section 364 by reducing the penalty to not more than seven years, and that he reduce the penalty under section 365, which defines lesser offences, to one of imprisonment for not more than five years.

Mr. S. H. KNOWLES (Winnipeg North Centre): As the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Roebuck) has suggested, it is difficult to identify in brief form the principle of this bill. Many hon. members who have spoken seem to have regarded the principle as relating only to changes in the penalties to be provided for offences on the part of postal employees. I would point out that there is also section 3, which would change the penalties provided in section 436 of the criminal code, which section has to do with defrauding the government by delivering to the armed services goods which do not measure up to the specifications laid down. In other words, the broad principle of the bill is that certain