

Criminal Code

I do not believe the minister wants to prevent us from discussing the principle of this bill which he is introducing and, when discussing it, we will not be able, during the consideration of the part which has to do with obscenity, to refrain from talking about drunkenness, for instance, and other subjects. The bill as submitted to the house contains sections dealing among other things, with offensive weapons. I fail to see how offensive weapons have anything to do with obscene literature.

I see here, for instance, that there is a new procedure concerning the accused, because of the publication of evidence brought up at the preliminary investigation. Incidentally, this is a very good thing. I also note that under this amendment, the magistrate may order that the decision rendered with regard to the publication of evidence be modified. Then, I wonder, Mr. Chairman, how we could deal with the principle of the bill—

An hon. Member: Do so.

Mr. Denis: But I shall simply point out to the minister—

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice: Yes, in committee.

Mr. Denis: I shall point out to the minister that if we intend to criticize, or approve certain things, I hope that the Minister of Justice will be kind enough to take notes, so that when the various sections are submitted to the committee, he will be better able to answer our objections. In this way, I think, all those who want to go on leave or get in touch with their families again, could do so sooner. When the sections are called in committee, the minister will have found the answers, which will simplify discussion.

Mr. Fulton: Precisely.

Mr. Denis: I shall not deal with all amendments to the Criminal Code. I shall, for instance, only mention firearms and permits. Under section 8, I read:

A permit in Form 42, 43 or 45 may be issued by a local registrar of firearms.

That is all right. But you give more latitude to those who issue permits. However, I have no objection to that. As a matter of fact, this will help those who are responsible for giving out those licences. This means, in other words, that we can obtain those permits more easily.

[Mr. Denis.]

But, it is not those who issue the permits who are dangerous: it is those to whom those firearms are given. If the minister had wished to afford better protection to society, instead of amending the Criminal Code in such a way as to know whether or not such and such a person is entitled to issue permits, in accordance with forms 42, 43 or 45, he should have required a more detailed inquiry about those to whom permits are granted. At present, under the existing legislation, permits may be granted for the possession of firearms to protect one's life or property.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am not allowed to answer the hon. member now, but I can assure him that I shall answer him when the house is in committee.

Mr. Denis: Quite so; what I want is an answer. But before the house goes into committee, I am directing questions to the minister in order that he may give me satisfactory answers.

A firearm permit may be obtained to protect one's life or property, but it is a matter of knowing how, or for what reason, one must protect one's life and what is the value of the property one has to protect, before being entitled to an offensive weapon.

Anyone may obtain a firearm, in accordance with subclause (a) of section 94. But I would suggest to the hon. minister that the danger does not lie with those who issue the permits but rather with those who obtain them. I am convinced that there is some lack of control, that the investigation made is not adequate; I am convinced that there is lack of consistency towards those who are really in need of protection.

For instance, I have in my possession a hunting gun. I have had it for the last 20 years perhaps.

Mr. Rodrigue Bourdages (Laval): You do not know how to shoot.

Mr. Denis: Never mind, in the next elections, there will be so many Conservatives that even if I am a poor shot, I will surely hit a few.

So I would respectfully say to the hon. minister that the threat is not from those who issue licences, but those who are issued licences. An investigation must also be conducted to discover whether a person has made improper use of a firearm. Personally, I have not made improper use of my firearm because I have wounded none of the hon. members opposite. However, there is a limit.

An hon. Member: Words are more dangerous.