

age. At the committee meeting this morning we were shown a crime comic published to promote the sale of government bonds, and bearing the name of the Bank of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Horner: A little sugar with the poison!

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: That may be so, but it was a comic; and not only was it a comic, but a crime comic—and used by a department of government for the purpose of selling bonds.

Hon. Mr. Haig: That shows how deprived we are.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: That may be so. But I am instancing this to show how widespread is the public demand for comics. Anyone who has children or young people in his house knows that the very first thing they turn to when the papers come in are the comics. You gentlemen who are past the meridian of life may regard that addiction as very frivolous, but it is human nature as exemplified in the population among which we live.

I repeat, that to pass a drastic measure of this kind, and to so alarm our retailers as to deter them from handling any of these goods, whether good, bad or indifferent, is not the kind of legislation which this Senate should endorse. We should attach the stigma of crime only to those who know they are committing a crime or, if they do not know it, should know it. Will anybody here suggest that the operators of every one of the ten thousand retail stores which handle goods of this kind should be forced to read every page that they sell, and be held responsible for every page? My friend may amend the bill to make it more drastic if he feels that that course does not violate any British principle, and if he makes it applicable to those who produce and publish this material, I will vote for it; but I will not vote to "ride" the little retailer all over the Dominion of Canada. As the Minister of Justice said in the other place, what concerned him was the position of the small retailer; and it is the retailer's fate under drastic legislation of this nature with which I, too, am concerned.

The Hon. the Chairman: I did not like to interrupt the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck), but I should like to have his amendment formally before the committee. He has made a motion, but it is not before me in writing. I suggest that he let me have it, and that it should have a seconder before the debate is proceeded with.

Hon. Mr. Davies: I have just a few words to say on this matter. I am wholeheartedly in favour of the bill. One complaint has

reached me from the father of two sons, who says that these publications are about all you can get boys to read nowadays.

I intend to support this amendment, but from a standpoint entirely different from that of the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck). In the committee this morning I asked to have read the names of the publishers of these comics, and I was astonished to find that I know very well and intimately the principals of three of these publishing companies. These men are just as good people as we are, just as sincere, honest, Christian, church-going people, and no one is going to tell me that they are interested in doing anything which will create or encourage juvenile delinquency.

Hon. Mr. Haig: The statement was not that these people printed "crime comics", but that they printed "comics".

Hon. Mr. Davies: I understood the witness to say "crime comics".

Hon. Mr. Haig: No.

Hon. Mr. Davies: I think he did. He held up one or two magazines that they were printing.

Hon. Mr. Horner: The question asked in committee was whether they were "comics", not "crime comics".

Hon. Mr. Haig: And the two firms he mentioned are dropping them.

Hon. Mr. Davies: What I have reference to is the statement that one publisher was printing one, and another two, crime comics. They call them crime comics; whether they are or not I do not know.

I am supporting the amendment with one object in mind: Let us give these publishers the chance to "clean house" and I do not think we shall have any more trouble about comics. We should say that every person who "makes, prints, publishes, distributes, circulates, or has in possession for any such purpose any obscene written matter, picture, model or other thing whatsoever" should be prosecuted. I do not think we would have any more trouble if this were done. These men have big printing and publishing establishments, and they probably do not know every detail of their business. I am quite sure that if we gave them an opportunity to clean house, these things would not be circulated among the retailers and the news vendors on the street corners of Toronto, Kingston and other cities where there is a large sale of them.

I did not vote for the amendment in committee this morning, but for the reason I have