

Criminal Records

young man or young woman who has a criminal record gets into some other difficulty in society and is charged under any section of the Criminal Code, what happens when bail comes to be set? In all our great, sprawling urban centres the Crown counsel reads out the record. If the record is A plus B equals C, what happens? A different scale of bail is set. The record is referred to every time the question of bail arises.

Once a young person has paid his debt to society and goes out to try to obtain employment, what is the situation if he requires to be bonded in order to obtain a job? Since he has a criminal record, the bonding company will not make him bondable.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether in making his last statement the hon. member is being up-to-date on that subject. The fact is that there is a procedure whereby bonding companies do grant bonds to persons who have been previously convicted. This fact was the subject of a public announcement last fall, when a great deal of detail was given.

Mr. Woolliams: The Solicitor General may want to make a speech on the subject, but he knows as well as I do that when an application is made to a bonding company by a person with a criminal record, the bonding company will take a tough look at it. The company uses its discretion whether to grant the person a bond.

Mr. McIlraith: The hon. member is not up-to-date at all on that.

Mr. Woolliams: As far as I am concerned, that is what is going on in Canada today. Let the minister check it out.

Mr. McIlraith: It has not been going on for the last six months.

Mr. Woolliams: My hon. friend says that I am not up-to-date. He is so up-to-date that when I asked him several months ago whether he had Crown counsel representing the Department of Justice in a matter dealing with drugs, a question I asked him as Solicitor General, as the person who appoints Crown counsel, who are generally Liberal—in politics that is how they are appointed—on the subject of sentence, he used the wishy-washy answer that he knew nothing about the charges or the appointments. I suggest a man who does not know anything about—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the hon. member is not straying

from the bill now before the House. I invite him to revert to what we are supposed to be considering, which is the principle of Bill C-5 which is now under consideration.

Mr. Woolliams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only reason I put the question was that this is still a matter of court procedure and concerns the appointment of Crown counsel. Young men and women who come before magistrates and courts and who are dealt with by those the minister appoints, if convicted are given a criminal record. Therefore, I submit my point is admissible in so far as this particular argument is concerned.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may think that, but if the Chair has to make a ruling I would tell the hon. member that what he is saying is irrelevant to the bill.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I have always abided by your rulings, but may I say through you that the Solicitor General should be prepared to accept the argument I have put forward with regard to the bonding of young people. The situation today is that people with criminal records, irrespective of under what section of the Criminal Code of Canada they are charged, are not given a bond. I suggest it is high time we took a hard look at this situation.

May I come back to a matter I started with. We have developed a new committee system. The justice committee made certain recommendations to the government and to the minister. In spite of this, the bill has not been drawn along those lines. Committees make recommendations to a minister having made a study of a certain subject and having called before it witnesses from across the nation. In view of this, those recommendations should be accepted by the minister and the government. The committee hears all the pros and cons before making its decision.

The minister has not yet told the House, though he may when he closes the debate, why he has not accepted the recommendations made by the committee and as set out by the hon. member for Welland. If, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said the other day, we are moving toward the presidential system of government, which means that our committees would take on a new type of responsibility in making recommendations to the government, then surely under such system the recommendations of committees should be accepted. On that ground this bill is