

PRISON OR INSTITUTION FOR YOUTHS ON REMAND ?

THE Minister for Justice, Mr. TRAYNOR, speaking on the Criminal Justice Bill, 1960, which had been returned from the Senate with some amendments, said that, under Section 9, provision was made to deal with young persons between the ages of 16 and 21 who were on remand awaiting trial, or awaiting sentence, and who might, with their consent, be sent to a remand institution instead of a prison.

Mr. DILLON (F.G.) thought that there seemed to be something odd about providing in the Bill a provision that a district justice should ask for the consent of a person of 16 years of age whether he should be sent to prison or to an institution.

MAINLY FOR GIRLS

The Minister said that this provision was mainly intended for girls who might be remanded in custody, so that they could be sent either to a prison or a convent. If the girl objected to being sent to a convent she could elect to be sent to prison.

There had been some reference in the Senate to a particular convent, but he did not think that there was a whole lot in what was said. All the Bill was doing was to arrange that girls be sent to a particular part of the convent rather than the convent proper.

Mr. F. COOGAN (F.G.) asked what would happen if there was a difference between the wishes of the parents and the children.

Minister—A district justice would have the option to decide.

Mr. SWEETMAN (F.G.) thought that the proper way to deal with the matter was to give district justices absolute power to decide this matter.

INFLATION OF EGO

"One of the things wrong with 'teddy-boys' at the moment," said Mr. Sweetman, "is that they think they are grand fellows. They are trying to blow up their own importance; the fact that they are going to decide where they are going to be sent will further inflate

their ego. What we should try to do is to deflate them without being inhumane.

General McEOIN (F.G.) said that boys might decide to be sent to Mountjoy so that they could display to other fellows how tough they were. He thought that it would be a dangerous thing to leave such a decision in the hands of a boy of 16.

The Minister said a district justice had the alternative of sending a boy to Marlboro' House because of his age, but if he was the type a district justice thought unsuitable for Marlboro' House he could send him to Mountjoy or to another institution.

Mr. Dillon suggested that if the words "provided the person consents" were deleted, the house would agree to the Bill.

NOT SATISFIED

The Minister said that if the House was of that opinion he would try and meet the suggestion, but it would delay the passage of the Bill.

He was not satisfied, however, because it removed the right of girls to decide where they should be sent. This was what had been mainly intended.

Mr. Dillon said that if there was a problem about remanding a girl to a Magdalen home, he could not believe that the ecclesiastical authorities of the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, or any religious community, would not help to surmount that difficulty by providing a convent not associated with the charity of the Magdalen Home. The Minister had a right to expect that of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Mr. Traynor said he had no doubt that the Archbishop would accede to a request to make another convent available.

The Bill was passed, with the deletion of the words "provided the person consents" as suggested by Mr. Dillon.