

Official Languages

to know the evidence that has been gathered against him. In my opinion, this procedure offends the principles of natural justice which we have inherited. Our system of justice has made this a great nation; the system of justice in the United States has made it a great nation. Every commonwealth country has inherited the British tradition of justice and this has made them great nations.

I make this indictment, even though we have been told that the bill was examined at great length by a committee of the house. That committee had on it a majority of government members, and therefore it was prejudiced in favour of the opinion of the government. Let us lay it on the table; governments since confederation have taken advantage of their majorities. Government members are asked to support the government. If they fail to do so they defeat themselves, because they have to go back to their constituents in an election. Because of the great pressure upon them, government members stand together. This is why they vote in the same way. It is the reason government members are disciplined at the present time. It is true not only of the Liberals but of any government. They will stand together. When you have a minority government you have to indulge in hanky-panky in the backrooms. We saw this happen under a former Prime Minister when the government was forced to seek the support of splinter parties in order to stay in office. In that situation it is the tail that wags the dog, and not the dog that wags the tail.

A person should be informed immediately a complaint is made against him. If there is a hearing before a board, he is entitled to be present at the hearing and, if he wishes, to have counsel or a person trained in the law to defend him. The rules that govern an inquiry under the Inquiries Act should be invoked in respect of this legislation in order to protect Canadians. There should be the right of appeal from a decision of the board. In order that justice be done, a person should know what evidence there is against him and he should be represented at any hearing into the complaint made. If I may use the phrase of an hon. member who spoke earlier, this bill is a travesty of justice.

Why are there not more government members in the chamber? They were here today when their photographs were being taken. They are the executive of this nation. We are only the opposition. If we believed this was a good bill we would pass it and either be at home reading or dealing with

matters in our offices. We are not the government. I say without any reservation or equivocation that it is a disgrace that so few ministers and members of the government party are in the chamber to listen to this argument.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Last Friday when I was in the House of Commons I was saddened to hear the bells ringing for some 40 minutes until enough government members arrived to support certain legislation which they were trying to implement. This was on a Friday afternoon, but nothing appeared in the press to tell the Canadian people how irresponsible this government was on that occasion.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Woolliams: Why is the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) not here when a matter of such importance is debated?

An hon. Member: He does not care.

Mr. Gray: Where is your leader?

Mr. Woolliams: He does not happen to be the Prime Minister at present.

Mr. Baldwin: He is on his way.

Mr. Woolliams: That is the only defence that the members on the government side have. I have told them that they are the executive and they are running the country. Our job on this side is to suggest amendments and to oppose measures when we think they are wrong. Our job here is to drive government members into positions into which we believe they should be driven when anything needs to be done.

An hon. Member: There will be a day of reckoning.

Mr. Paproski: And it won't be long.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we are still dealing with the amendment before us, to amend clauses 28, 29 and 30, or if we are getting into a general debate.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must say I had the same misgivings, but I realize this is a matter of great importance and the hon. member is speaking with great feeling. However, I invite the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), who is familiar