

Government Orders

● (1320)

The member does his side and his cause a great disservice, constantly focusing on problems that the native community or a native community or any minority community in Canada may have. If the member wishes to ask some questions dealing with the impact of this legislation across Canada, I would be pleased to answer. I am not prepared in any way, shape or form to allow the member opposite to put questions forward like we heard over and over again in question periods over the last two months in this place that deal specifically with the native community or any other community.

This bill is not meant to just strike out at people who violate the law, the norms of society, when it comes to trafficking controlled substances. I do not really care if they are Gaelic, if they are Cape Bretoners, if they are from the province of Quebec, from the Gaspé or if they happen to be natives. The way this government operates is that it legislates for all Canadians without noting which region they live in or which ethnic group they come from.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, the explanatory notes in Bill C-7 specify that the proposed enactment consolidates Canada's drug control policy to fulfill Canada's obligations under international conventions.

That consolidation, which is no doubt necessary, brings about major consequences, the most important of which is the repeal of the Narcotic Control Act, as well as of Parts III and IV of the Food and Drugs Act.

In the guise of that consolidation, the legal and statutory approach to a major problem is dramatically changed and this, without prior consultation. Yes, without consultation, and in a strange heavy context which raises concerns on this side of the House.

As you did, Mr. Speaker, I heard the comments that were made to the media by the Solicitor General of Canada on February 15, as I mentioned earlier. If it is true that there is an emergency, as if the present Narcotic Control Act could not allow the RCMP to stop the lucrative traffic of cocaine and other hard drugs, there is a problem with the system.

A country can have all the useful and necessary laws in some activity sector, but if the political will to enforce these laws in some areas of that country does not exist, they will be useless. So, we believe that it is necessary for Canada and for Quebec to have efficient and stringent legislation that responds to the present and imminent need to stop this plague. But, most of all,

the police forces must feel that they have the support of those who will vote for that legislation.

From this House, we must give a clear message to anyone engaged in that black market that the legislator is serious in his or her willingness to counter narcotics and all other drugs. In order to do so, we should step up our effort and enforce the present laws while waiting for the updating wished for by Bill C-7.

In that regard, it might be useful to remind the Solicitor General of Canada of certain provisions of the existing Narcotic Control Act compared to provisions found in Bill C-7 dealing virtually with the same issue. If you read the bill, you will see that the legislator's intent was to criminalize the trafficking in designated substances as well as their import and export. However, the legislator does not criminalize trafficking since trafficking, and importing and exporting of narcotics are already considered a criminal activity under the existing Narcotic Control Act.

I could mention a whole list of provisions contained in Bill C-7 that are identical or similar to those contained in the existing Narcotic Control Act, but since I do not have the time, I will simply mention to this House that there is already an act that can efficiently counter cocaine trafficking or trafficking in any other narcotic, provided it is enforced everywhere in Canada.

As regards the statement of the Solicitor General of Canada who said that Bill C-7 would allow police forces to make sales under surveillance, which means that double agents could infiltrate smuggling networks and catch criminals by proposing deals, one can also question that novelty.

When the Solicitor General made that statement, he was referring to clause 54(2) of Bill C-7.

That provision reads as follows:

(2) The Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Solicitor General of Canada, may make regulations that pertain to investigations and other law enforcement activities conducted under this Act by a member of a police force and other persons acting under the direction and control of a member and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations: (b) exempting, on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the regulations, a member of a police force that has been designated pursuant to paragraph (a) and other persons acting under the direction and control of the member from the applications of this Act or the regulations;

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There is absolutely nothing new in this bill. Something similar exists in the current Narcotic Control Act. The investigative power of police officers already allows them to infiltrate a group that they are watching and further, section 18 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act already provides for that procedure.