

Hate Propaganda

half a caucus meeting. So, we are into this debate today, and I say with the greatest respect—and this may be why the interest is waning—that our knowledge of it is not as good as it might have been. We should have studied this bill clause by clause. I would have liked to have seen what would have happened when the House, in committee of the whole, reached section 267C, the provision about seizing documents. There would have been a filibuster and we would have killed it.

I say that this particular section is unconstitutional. If we want to streamline our committee system, that is fine. Hitler streamlined things, and so did Mussolini. I know the minister does not like this, and the people who want rule changes shake their heads. But I would remind the minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that I have the right to say what I have said, and I will continue to say it.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Would the hon. member permit a question. No one is disputing his right to say anything in this House, but would it not have been open to any member, in accordance with the new rules, to submit an amendment at the report stage 24 hours before debate began and without any limitation whatever?

Mr. Woolliams: The minister is talking about the report stage. I wrote the minister a letter and he was very courteous and replied. I said that I hoped the bill would not come before the House until we got the reports of the committee. The minister did carry out his word. I got the reports of the committee, but where was I when the reports came out? The House had adjourned for the Easter recess and the bill was called the first day we all returned. I had these reports airmailed to me special delivery during the Easter recess, and no other member had time to study them. We had to draw up our amendments—(and I am sorry the minister had to raise this point)—based on the old bill because the new bill as amended by the committee, was not printed. In fact, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) had to call me to ask where he could get a copy, and asked why it was so secret.

The minister says: "Why doesn't somebody in your party stand up and complain?" Well, I am complaining. If this is the kind of committee work and consideration we are going to give this bill, then our general knowledge will be limited. With the greatest respect to the minister, we should have had the opportunity to deal with this measure clause by clause,

[Mr. Woolliams.]

with every member as well informed as the committee members. This is not an easy piece of legislation. Therefore, I say at the outset that the standing committee is unable to function well.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Let us take another look at committees. We have some free minds in our committees. I am always impressed by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Hogarth). On the other hand, there are other members, some members of this party and some members of other parties, who sort of line up along political lines. Every committee is controlled by the government and most committees have government chairmen. If I were writing the Cohen report I would not be like the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan), because he not only wrote the report that recommended the legislation but he sat on the committee which decided whether it was good or bad legislation that should or should not come before this House.

The Lord Chief Justice of Great Britain said that justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. I do not know whether it is my training in the law that makes me unfit to appreciate these parliamentary niceties, but if I walked into a court of law which resembled this committee I would take a chance on my bar association and challenge that judge such as this member as being prejudice. I would succeed. I am just pointing this out to those who talk about fair committees and how they work. I am not impressed with this committee system and I never will be impressed with it.

I do not suggest every bill should be studied in committee of the whole, but certain bills that change fundamental rights should be studied in this House clause by clause so every Member of Parliament knows what is in it and has a capability of voting. We are now considering a bill in respect of which there is division in the House. People will vote according to their conscience, but they can only come to a conclusion according to their conscience when they have knowledge.

The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) was a very active member of our committee. He took his position on the hate bill according to his conscience, as a result of his knowledge. I know he admires my position and I admire his, but that is a different situation. There are people, and make no mistake about it, who do not know what is in the bill or what it says. The minister knows that.