

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 19, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed from Friday, March 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. Kaplan that Bill C-9, an Act to establish the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, to enact an Act respecting enforcement in relation to certain security and related offences and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof or in relation thereto, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs; and the motion of Mr. Deniger (p. 2178).

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I must say it is with considerable surprise that I find myself speaking again on this Bill, having spoken on it last week; but we were faced with a rather unsettling and unusual procedure on Friday afternoon when the Hon. Member for La Prairie (Mr. Deniger) to everyone's surprise brought in the motion that the question should now be put.

The results of this motion were rather clearly defined by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) when he pointed out that this was simply the most brutal form of closure available to a government to limit debate on second reading of a very controversial Bill. It is rather interesting to make note of what happened shortly thereafter. The House became involved in one of those heated exchanges, where there was a great deal of heat and very little light thrown on the subject.

If we look at page 2184 of *Hansard*, we find the kinds of things that were being said. Hon. Members were engaged in a free-for-all. I am sure some of them would regret having said the words they said. The Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap) is shown on that page as referring to this group as the "Canadian 'Gestapo' ". He said:

There will be no independent reporting on the doings of this secret service, this Canadian "Gestapo".

I read *Hansard* this morning to find out what actually happened, and to my surprise the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) said:

There is a little difference between the RCMP and the Gestapo.

● (1110)

It is not exactly the adjective I would have chosen; "there is a little difference". I would hope that there is an enormous difference between the RCMP and the Gestapo and that it ever remains that way. This is the kind of half-hearted support the RCMP is accustomed to getting from the Solicitor General.

The debate then went on with the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinar) explaining the reasons for this motion, which has the effect of closure. It will limit debate quite severely at second reading. If it were not so serious, I would be amused with the Liberal Party. Whatever motion is in front of the House or whatever stage we are at, that is in their minds not a very important stage of the Bill, particularly if they want to impose closure at that time.

One thinks back to 1968 when the Government was defeated on a money Bill. I well recall the Right Hon. Lester Pearson, then Prime Minister, referring to it as a mere defeat on third reading, not of any importance. He very much stressed that it was third reading and did not have the importance of second reading.

A couple of months ago the Government was defeated in committee on a money Bill. Of course, that was of no consequence. That was not important because it was in committee. On Friday the President of the Privy Council said this is not all that important, that after all it is only second reading. He said at page 2917, of *Hansard*, and I quote:

Therefore if we understand... how the Canadian parliamentary system works, there is no reason to get upset when at this stage a Government Member tries to bring this debate to a logical conclusion—

Bringing in closure at this stage is not important. He went on to say:

—considering the fact that on second reading, only the principle of a Bill is to be examined before referring the Bill to committee—

We find second reading is not important. We now find that report stage is not important, third reading is not important, committee stage is not important and second reading is not important. I wonder when Bills in front of Parliament do become important. I guess they become important when they interfere with the orderly progress the Government imagines it goes through to get legislation through the House before they are called to meet their maker. Is it in June that we will be apprised of the election day, probably an election to be held in August or, failing that, in November?

The Government feels it must get this Bill through before it has to adjourn, prorogue or dissolve. One wonders what is the urgency. As I said last week, I am concerned about the appointments that will be made if this Bill becomes law. There