

Let me make one final comment. Mr. Nugent has suggested in the course of his questioning that this is a bad bill, that there is something wrong with it, and so on and so forth. It would seem to me that if he had such firm opinions on the bill, and if he had sound arguments to support his opinions, then he should have been willing to put his opinions to the test of debate and consideration at the proper and usual stage, which would be once all the witnesses had been heard and we began discussing and considering the bill itself, clause by clause. Then finally we would report to the house whether we were in favour or against the bill, or whether we should amend it, and so on. I can only suggest that by the use of this procedure Mr. Nugent himself had indicated he feels that his views on this particular subject are not as sound as he later stated to the press.

Mr. NUGENT: I will be heard on that.

Mr. GRAY: However, I would like to suggest, without going into further detail on this point, that I think it should be a basic principle of a democracy that before we come to a conclusion we hear all the evidence, discuss the bill on its merits, and then vote upon it. If we support this motion today, we will not only be in accord with the proper precedents and rules of the house but we will be carrying out the duties imposed upon us to give a proper study to legislation and report in a detailed way on the bill to the House of Commons.

Mr. NUGENT: I think Mr. Gray hit on a point that certainly is going to be considered very seriously here, that is the use of committees and the effect of our action upon it. That is exactly what prompted me to make my motion last week.

As I understand the situation, the only groups who were to come to give evidence on this bill, other than Dr. Barry, were two groups who were opposed to it. So we have had representation from all those who were sponsoring it.

There was no doubt in my mind that it is a very bad bill, and there is no doubt now. It seemed to me there was considerable opinion in the committee to that effect, and that we had given this bill more than ample discussion.

Since Mr. Gray has mentioned the use of committees, I merely point out that this is a private member's bill. Most private member's bills get one hour's discussion in the house. If they are very bad bills they get off with discussion, but this went past that stage even though in the house there were some doubts expressed on the effect it would have. The house now comes to this committee, where we have sat for meeting after meeting. The more we sit, the more obvious it becomes that the bill does not do what it is supposed to do; that in fact it is broader in scope than it purports to be; that it does more harm than good, and that we are going to continue to take up more and more time on it. I believe in the system of having everyone heard who wants to be heard, but just as in courts once the judge has heard one side and says the case is not proven, then it is stopped. I hoped by this procedure to save the committee the trouble of coming back for several more meetings. I know last week a lot of people thought it was more trouble. Mr. Cameron is very spirited this morning, very angry, and says we are taking time discussing this, but he could not take the time to be here last week. There were not very many members here last week. That being the case, I felt the way in which I put my motion last week was a good way. I felt the house made a mistake in bringing this to the committee. I felt we had gone on far too long with it. It was more and more obvious that the bill was hopeless. The method upon which I hit was, I thought, a way not only of disposing of the bill but of giving emphasis to the belief I found current in the committee that the less said about this the better, and the quicker we got rid of the bill the better. Therefore, if it had been