

reads now, no member of the force is eligible to be appointed. Representations by the RCMP Association of 17 Divisions which represents members of the force were made to the effect that no one who has ever been a member of the RCMP should be appointed to this particular committee. I think this is a reasonable suggestion which could enhance the fairness and objectivity of the committee.

Another recommendation made by the association was that the decision under the grievance procedure be rendered within a six-month period. This would appear to be a worth-while recommendation as well. It does place some demands on the review committee but these demands would not be either onerous or unreasonable. I think it would be abundantly equitable and fair to ensure that an RCMP officer's grievance is dealt with as expeditiously as possible. The association also recommended that where a decision is not rendered within six months, the decision be deemed to be in favour of the grieving member. That, in my view, would certainly provide an incentive to encourage swift decision-making by the RCMP and by the review committee.

Another aspect of this legislation which appears to be wanting is Subsection 33(4) which deals with the types of grievances which are referable to the committee. It says that the Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing the types of grievances to be referred to the committee. In my view, Mr. Speaker, it would be advisable if the grievances were spelled out explicitly rather than by way of regulation. That would serve to make the whole process more definite and add some certainty.

● (1120)

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that the Official Opposition supports this Bill in principle. We believe it should be dealt with on a non-partisan basis. The legislation has been on the back burner for far too long. Both the public and members of the force have been waiting for it. The sooner we deal with this Bill in committee, the sooner it becomes law, the better as far as the public is concerned. We look forward to a thorough debate of this Bill in committee. We will be raising the questions I have raised in my submissions and, hopefully, with the support of all Parties, we will make this a better piece of legislation. Thank you for the opportunity I had to speak on Bill C-65.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in this debate on Bill C-65, an Act which is long overdue. In fact, the Solicitor General (Mr. Beatty) indicated yesterday that this is the seventh attempt, since the report of the Marin Commission was issued in 1976, which successive Governments have made to deal with the important concerns set out in Bill C-65. I might say as well that, although the Solicitor General was not able to be present for the debate today, I do want to convey to him my best wishes on his appointment. This is the first Bill he has brought before the House in his capacity as Solicitor General and I know his reputation for fairness and integrity will serve him well in that very important position. I have had the privilege of working

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closely with the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe over the past six years as a member of the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments, and I know that members of that committee, indeed all Members of this House, would agree with me in saying that we welcome the appointment of that Hon. Member to this very important position.

In turning to the provisions of Bill C-65, I am not going to repeat all of the concerns raised in the context of committee study of this Bill and predecessor Bills. However, I do want to note that the essential purpose of the Bill is one which we in this Party welcome. Indeed, the purpose of the Bill is three-fold. First, to establish a public complaints commission for the RCMP to ensure there is a forum for the adjudication of complaints about wrongdoing within the RCMP. Second, to establish an external review committee to review grievances by members of the force. In many ways the present grievance procedure is something out of the Dark Ages. It denies fundamental justice and fair play to members of the force. Finally, the external review committee would have the power to deal with serious discipline cases and provide for orders relating to discharge and demotion.

In a very general sense the Bill is based on the recommendations of the Marin Commission established in 1974 and which reported in 1976. However, there are a number of fundamental differences between the recommendations of that commission and those of the Government in Bill C-65. In most cases, I submit, the proposals of the commission are better than those of the Government and I will deal with the specifics when I come to those particular areas.

The last time this Bill or its predecessor in the last Parliament, Bill C-13, was given consideration was when the subject matter of Bill C-13, which, as my friend from York South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata) pointed out, is virtually identical to that of Bill C-65, was discussed last spring when it was before the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. That committee received an order of reference to study the subject matter of the Bill. None of the predecessor Bills were debated in the House. They were tabled for first reading, but this is the first time there has ever been a debate in this House on amendments to the RCMP Act.

● (1125)

The Senate committee heard from a number of witnesses. In addition to the Solicitor General and representatives of his Ministry it heard from the Attorney General of British Columbia, Mr. Brian Smith, counsel for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Alan Borovoy, and representatives of the Associations of 17 Divisions. I will have more to say about the very fine work that is being done by the association in a few moments. The committee heard as well from members of the Divisional Staff Relations Representative Program, the Div. Rep. Program as it is known within the force. The Senate committee also received written representations from a number of Attorneys General and other officials.