

Point of Order

The commission has asked for 41 changes to the legislation to strengthen and improve the national police force in Canada. It would be a serious error to jam this through without debate by way of an omnibus bill.

Hopefully the government will reconsider this position and allow these issues to be debated individually because of their importance to Canadians.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to respond to the interventions of my friends opposite. They have made some interesting, not particularly new arguments but arguments that I think are worth spending a little time on.

I am advised from across the aisle that these were arguments that were used by the government House leader on a previous occasion. I am sure he would be very much flattered by the fact that his arguments were once again presented in this House and people quoted them with great authority and great enthusiasm.

Mr. Dingwall: But in a much more coherent fashion.

Mr. Cooper: It is certainly arguable as to whether or not the original argument was better put than the references made to them today. I leave that in your hands, Mr. Speaker.

However, the intriguing thing is, no matter how good those arguments were that my colleague the government House leader made several years ago, they were not good enough. Mr. Speaker, you will recall that what happened was that the Speaker of the day ruled that in spite of the compelling arguments that he made, he did not win the day.

We are in a similar circumstance today. There is nothing precedent setting about the discussion here today. In fact, one of the Speakers said in the past, Madam Sauve, I believe it was, in a very brief one paragraph ruling: "There is no point in me going through all the precedents we have here. The bottom line is that the tradition on a bill if it is called an omnibus bill is that

the House has been able to proceed with that particular piece of legislation".

Therefore, there is nothing new here today. There is nothing new at all. What I need to do, just to make sure the record is set straight, is to spend a few moments refuting some of those arguments.

First of all, this is the particular bill we are talking about, Bill C-63. My friends have described it as an omnibus bill. It is not a great big thick document. It is eight pages long.

An hon. member: Short and sweet.

Mr. Cooper: Short and sweet. It accomplishes a very simple task. If we look at Beauchesne's sixth edition, page 192, citation 626, and I quote:

(1) Although there is no specific set of rules or guidelines governing the content of a bill, there should be a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of a bill. They must be relevant to and subject to the umbrella which is raised by the terminology of the long title of the bill.

The umbrella of this particular legislation was made very clear in the budget. It indicated very clearly that the government planned to dissolve or terminate a number of corporations and other bodies for a central theme, being the ability to cut government expenditures and, therefore, as much as possible relieve the burden on the Canadian taxpayers and to reduce the stress and pressure of the very difficult debt situation we are facing in this country. That is the umbrella.

What is the title of the bill? What does the title say? It is very simple: an act to dissolve or terminate certain corporations and other bodies. Citation 627 of Beauchesne's sixth edition states:

• (1230)

A bill may have two titles, one long and one short. Both the long title and the short title may be amended, if amendments to the bill make it necessary.

(1) *Long title*—The long title sets out in general terms the purposes of the bill. It should cover everything in the bill.

I think it is very clear that the title of this particular bill does just that. It says very clearly, "an act to dissolve or terminate certain corporations and other bodies". The title is consistent with Beauchesne and with our practices in the past and I would argue so is the bill.