

It is just as appalling, 15 years after the Mackenzie Commission and two and one half years after the McDonald report, that this is the first opportunity the elected representatives of the people of Canada have had to debate the most critical of issues. That is a dereliction of responsibility on the part of the Government. That is far too long for us to wait to come to grips with respect to this type of legislation.

There is no question in my mind that, as a result of the ineptitude and inefficiency of this Minister and the Government, the morale of individuals who have served on our security service has suffered. They have been scrutinized by royal commissions. The service has been scrutinized by a Senate committee. Instead of producing legislation which was appropriate and realistic, the Minister introduced a Bill which was poorly conceived, planned and drafted. In the area of national security, which is critical to any country's continued existence, this Government has bungled badly. It has not lived up to its responsibility. I suggest that we are paying the price now.

On the first occasion that we have had to consider this important legislation the Minister has suggested, both inside and outside the House, that we should close our eyes and not consider the matter of the responsibility invested in us by the electorate of Canada. This is unworthy of any minister of any cabinet. We on this side of the House take our responsibilities seriously. We are going to give this matter careful and reasonable consideration. We are not going to close our eyes and let legislation pass which is not satisfactory, appropriate and precise. The Minister should understand this. It has taken him a very long period of time to come up with his own proposals. It is a matter of right that we should give fair and reasonable consideration to this legislation on the floor of the House of Commons and in the course of committee hearings. It is not only the Members of Parliament but also the people of Canada who are interested in having appropriate and effective legislation and they should be given the opportunity of making their views known, notwithstanding the fact that we have had royal commissions and a Senate report. What we have before us now is a so-called new proposal brought forward by the Solicitor General after much surgery has taken place with respect to his original proposal, Bill C-157.

I would have hoped that after the Minister had gone through this process and chosen to act when he brought in this legislation, he could have gotten it right. Perhaps this is being too kind. When the Minister introduced his original legislation, Bill C-157, he said it reflected a fair and reasonable approach. He now says that the criticism of that particular proposal is exaggerated. I can only say that Bill C-157, which was introduced on May 18, 1983, was totally, abysmally and terribly wrong.

I would like to deal with that legislation, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is relevant to what we have before us today. After the 15-year period of consideration by a variety of royal commissions, that legislation was met with universal disapproval and disfavour. It was roundly and soundly criticized by every conceivable force. Provincial attorneys general were

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united in their opposition to that Bill. Civil liberties groups condemned it. The Canadian Bar Association is adamant that the Bill either had to be withdrawn or amended in a very substantial way. If I tried, in the time I had allotted to me today, it would be impossible for me to list all the groups, individuals and agencies that have shown deep concern with respect to the thrust and import of the proposal brought forward by the Minister.

The unified response by Canadians did not occur by accident. It was not a result of knee-jerk reaction. That response took place because the Bill was the most poorly thought out and seriously flawed piece of legislation that I have had the misfortune of seeing introduced in this House. Bill C-157 bore little resemblance to the recommendations made in the report of the McDonald Commission. In section after section fundamental safeguards necessary to protect the rights and liberties of Canadians have been omitted. From any perspective the Bill was an unmitigated disaster.

It was at this point that Members on this side of the House approached the Minister and suggested the subject matter of the Bill be referred to the Commons Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in order to obtain the full scrutiny of the elected representatives of the people of Canada. We would have liked to have an all-Party committee which would go forward and consider the subject matter of that initial proposal. It seemed logical that a committee of the House composed of elected representatives would be an appropriate place to study this legislation. That offer was rejected out of hand by the Minister.

**Mr. Kaplan:** I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I would like the record to be corrected in the assertion that it was the Government that rejected the establishment of an all-Party committee. The NDP were willing. It was the Conservatives who prevented it from happening.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert):** That is certainly not a question of privilege. The Hon. Member for Saskatoon West.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, the air is strange in the House today. There are hallucinatory activities taking place here of which I have no knowledge. I would like to say to the Solicitor General that I was privy to some of the discussions which took place. My colleague from Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence), who was the critic at the time, put the proposition to the Solicitor General that we should indeed have a standing committee of the House of Commons consider this matter.

The question of privilege is preposterous, as you have pointed out, Mr. Speaker. It has no relevance and is in fact without substance. If the Minister cares to dispute it, that is fine. I say that that is the fact. The record will show that the Solicitor General did in fact refer the matter to another body of appointed people. That is, to the other place. A select committee of the Senate was then created for the purpose of looking at the provisions of the original legislation. During this period