

C-47, an Act respecting divorce and corollary relief; and Bill C-48, an Act to provide for the release of information that may assist in locating defaulting spouses and other persons and to permit, for the enforcement of support orders and support provisions, the garnishment and the attachment of certain moneys payable by Her Majesty in right of Canada, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the Government move forward with its divorce legislation. On behalf of my Party I have done everything I can to co-operate to see that the Bill moves forward expeditiously to the committee in the hope that it might even become law by the summer. In fact, I suggested to the Government House Leader (Mr. Hnatyshyn) that the three Bills that relate to the divorce question be read together at all stages. That order has found approval. Therefore, I am rising to speak to the second reading of all three Bills dealing with the question of divorce.

We have had some loss of time this afternoon but I want to reiterate the intention, which I know is shared by the New Democratic Party, to try to conclude second reading of the Bill this afternoon and see it referred to the Justice Committee. I must say that I was disturbed that the Minister took so long yesterday in his remarks. I would have wanted to speak yesterday and would have been prepared to do so if he had left some time for that purpose.

What disturbed me even more is to have read in the media yesterday that the Government does not expect that any of the Bills of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) will become law before the summer. This applies to the drunk driving legislation, which was part of Bill C-18 that is now before the Senate, and it applies to this Bill as well as to the Government's initiative on street soliciting.

I want to make the position of our Party very clear on these subjects. As early as last December we were offering our full co-operation to get the drunk driving legislation on the books in time for Christmas. We would have co-operated in moving toward that goal if the Government had had the initiative to do so.

With respect to the question of soliciting, our Party recognizes that it is a serious problem which, in some parts of our country, becomes even more serious during the summer. I want to put on the record for the Government once again that while we do not agree with the entire Bill that the Government brought forward with respect to street soliciting, we wanted to get it into committee. We would have co-operated with a short second reading debate so that the Bill could get to the committee. We could then determine if the Government is aware that its drafting of the Bill poses dangerous consequences for civil liberties and for prostitutes themselves. The Government recognizes that this would continue to be a problem even with its legislation on the books.

We wanted to hear from the Minister how the extra crime that appears to be the consequence of his legislation would be countered. What would happen to prostitutes under the legis-

lation as he proposes it? Would their lives be subject to greater danger, greater pressures from possibly corrupt policemen, from pimps, and from customers? We have a lot of questions about that Bill. At the same time, to read in the newspaper yesterday that the Minister is not prepared to get that legislation through by the summer should make it clear to the Canadian people that it is the Government that is responsible for these problems remaining with us. We are ready to co-operate on this side of the House. We would like to see the divorce Bill through. We would like to see a solution implemented in the area of street soliciting. We would like to see drunk driving legislation on the books. These Bills are not on the books because this Government is not organizing its business properly.

• (1630)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kaplan: It has the full co-operation—

Mr. Speyer: What about the Senate?

Mr. Kaplan: —of this side of the House in moving—

Some Hon. Members: Not true.

Mr. Gormley: What about Bill C-15?

Mr. Kaplan: You talk about what is happening today. I am not talking about Bill C-15. That is a different story. Bill C-15 is not a Bill that we are prepared to assist the Government in passing. We are prepared to see the Government move forward on these other three matters. I am sorry but before the delay today, before we had an opportunity to indicate on the floor our position on these other Bills, the Government was already throwing up its hands. I hope that I will not hear the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) say during the summer that street soliciting is the problem of the Opposition because the Opposition is not co-operating. We are co-operating. Let the Canadian people know where the responsibility is for the failure of this legislation, these three important Bills, to move forward now.

I would like to say a few words on the subject of divorce. I will reduce my remarks beyond perhaps what they should be and certainly beyond what I had in mind because I am anxious to see the Bill get to committee, perhaps by the end of the day.

We agree that divorce legislation needs to be reformed and that reform is overdue. We agree that the legislation now in effect tends to increase the contentious nature of a divorce proceeding. When that happens, reconciliation becomes less likely rather than more likely. We wanted to see legislation introduced that would make divorce less contentious. We are happy to see legislation brought forward that makes the divorce procedure less expensive and less drawn out.

The existing legislation requires if no fault can be found, that there must be three years of separation. That is a very lengthy period of time. We on this side of the House do not believe that a broken marriage, broken for one year, is more