

where there is clear and unequivocal evidence of Hon. Members of the House of Commons being somewhat limited or thwarted in carrying out their responsibilities. Sometimes these are external circumstances where people actually prevent other people from coming to the House of Commons. However, it is equally serious when we are prevented from carrying out our responsibilities as Members of Parliament by virtue of the fact that we do not have the information, or the administration is not up to providing us with information on legislation. Therefore, we do not have all the facts in our possession in order to deal adequately with the legislation before us.

I simply say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that I believe the point made by the Hon. Member for Edmonton West is a most valid point. I believe it is one of which we should be cognizant in terms of this piece of legislation and any subsequent legislation which comes before the House.

Mr. Speaker: I recognize the Hon. Member for Durham-Northumberland (Mr. Lawrence) next, followed by the Hon. Member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) on this point of order.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, you have invited argument on an intended ruling you will make. I may not speak on exactly the same point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Let me get things straight. The Hon. Member for Edmonton West has raised a very separate and distinct point of order on which I was going to rule. The Hon. Member for Edmonton West wished to present further argument, which I have heard. The Hon. Member for Saskatoon West more or less intervened on that point. I am quite prepared to hear argument relating to the other matter at an appropriate time. Is the Hon. Member for Burnaby prepared to intervene on the matter raised by the Hon. Member for Edmonton West?

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the question of privilege which has been raised—I believe it is a question of privilege. It certainly touches the privileges of all Members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: It has been raised as a point of order. I have not been asked to make a prima facie finding of privilege. It has been raised by the Hon. Member initially as a point of order and it has been considered by the Chair as a point of order.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): I am sorry. It was my understanding that it was raised in the context of privilege. I wanted just to take a brief moment to support the question of order or privilege which has been raised by the Hon. Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) because, of course, it goes to the very foundation of the consideration of this legislation which is before the House at the present time. I would note, as the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West, the distinguished House Leader of the Official Opposition, has already pointed out, that this particular report and the proceedings of the committee in these circumstances were extraordinary. It was at ten o'clock on Friday morning, Mr. Speaker, that the committee proceedings on Bill C-9 adjourned. For the previous

Security Intelligence Service

two days, the committee had considered a series of amendments with strict limitations and, I might add, unprecedented limitations with respect to time. So the committee concluded its deliberations, Mr. Speaker, at ten o'clock on Friday morning, and at twelve o'clock, or shortly thereafter on Friday afternoon, the chairman of the committee tabled what purported to be the report of the committee.

I would note, as has already been suggested by the Hon. Member for Edmonton West, that it was only late last night—and I was in my office at the time the proceedings were circulated—well after six o'clock, that Hon. Members of this House in fact received the transcripts in both French and English of four separate meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs with respect to this Bill.

I would note as well that, pursuant to Standing Order 79(2), all amendments made in any committee shall be reported to the House. I certainly did not see the exact form of the report which was submitted to the House, but nevertheless—

Mr. Speaker: With all deference to the Hon. Member, I do not believe the facts are in dispute, as he is setting out. The issue before us is whether it is proper for the House to proceed with the legislative stages of a Bill in the absence of the committee evidence being distributed in the usual printed form. That is the matter before the House. Will the Hon. Member please direct his remarks to that problem?

● (1530)

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Certainly, Mr. Speaker. As the Speaker is well aware, it is certainly the practice that proceedings of the committee are appended to the report of the committee so that Members attempting to draft amendments within the very strict time limits imposed will have some ability to do so. The circumstances are in many ways extraordinary. There is the unprecedented nature of the ruling in committee which resulted in the tabling of the report some two hours after the deliberations of the committee had been concluded. It was only last night that the transcripts of the committee proceedings were made available to all Members of Parliament. It was difficult, even for those of us who sat on the committee, to follow the somewhat tortured proceedings. Given all that, if there is to be an observance of both the spirit and the letter of the Standing Orders, Members such as the Hon. Member for Edmonton West should be given a further period of 24 hours within which to submit their amendments.

I note that we are on Motion No. 1 and I assume there will be some discussion on the Speaker's preliminary ruling with respect to the grouping of amendments. But that would not preclude the granting of what I consider to be the very important right of all Members of this House to submit amendments. A period of 24 hours should be granted so that the Hon. Member for Edmonton West and others who wish to peruse the transcripts of the committee—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is arguing for a change in the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders are quite clear about the period of time in which amendments may be pre-