

We can look at some of the clauses. I am sure that in the legislative committee we will get into some of them in more detail and with most of them we will not have much problem. Again, one notes that a lot of power given to the individual customs officers are really arbitrary powers.

For example, Clause 98 provides officers with the authority to search individuals "on reasonable grounds" that a contravention of the Act has occurred, yet no real definition of reasonable grounds is given.

Clause 99, which the spokesperson for the Liberal Party pointed out, creates some concern for me as well.

Most private mail is more than 30 grams. A person living somewhere else in the world writing a long letter to a relative living in Canada might include in that letter a family snapshot, and pretty soon you find the letter weighs more than 30 grams. That this should be subject to inspection by a Customs officer is, to my mind, not a good practice. I understand that in the contemporary world of drug smuggling drugs can be smuggled through private mail. I am not certain whether 30 grams is a proper cut-off level or not. I am certain that you cannot ship too much heroin or cocaine when the restriction is a weight in grams. I understand 30 grams of heroin or cocaine still gets a good dollar on the street. Instead of selling one envelope containing 100 grams of an illicit substance, a drug smuggler could send three or four envelopes weighing less than 30 grams. What about our liberties, Mr. Speaker? I am sure private mail is one of the most important of our civil liberties. The price we are paying to forgo that civil liberty in the interests of dealing with a major problem—and drug smuggling is a major problem—is perhaps too high, and what we are buying is not that effective anyway. We might end up in a situation with fewer civil liberties and no effective measure in terms of controlling the flow of drugs.

Clause 110 could be used in an arbitrary manner. It provides the authority to officers to seize any goods, conveyances and to seize anything which the officer believes will afford evidence in respect of a contravention. Again the clause can be used in an arbitrary manner. As we have found with Revenue Canada, the important part is how the regulations get enforced. That depends upon the type of men and women one attracts. It depends upon the type of leadership which the Minister and the senior officials of the Department give to their employees.

Clause 113 is one that I do not quite understand, but I am sure we can get a further explanation. It is a limitation upon the period in which seizures can be made, which has now been extended from three to six years. We would like more of a detailed explanation concerning this clause in committee.

● (1620)

In summation, there are not many things with which we have difficulty in this clause. We congratulate the new Minister for shepherding in a piece of legislation which has not been updated for a hundred and some years. I think it is a good sign; he is off on a good mark, I would suggest, in modernizing this piece of legislation. It is as good a place as any to start

International Peace and Security

with that Department. We wish him well in his new job, and I look forward to dealing in more detail with this Bill once it gets into committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Mr. MacKay, seconded by Mr. de Cotret, moves that Bill C-59, an Act respecting Customs, be read the second time and be referred to a legislative committee. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

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CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs) moved that Bill C-69, an Act to amend the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security Act and certain other Acts in relation thereto, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among House Leaders, and this is a Bill on which there is an agreement that we will deal with it through all stages today so that it can go to the other place to provide it with some matters to consider next week when that august Chamber reconvenes. As a result of my consultations, I think there is a disposition to accept the following motion and pass it without debate:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or other Order of the House, when Bill C-69, an Act to amend the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security Act is called, the House shall consider the Bill at the second reading stage and not later than the end of the time provided for Government Orders this day, the Bill shall be referred to a Committee of the Whole, read a third time and passed.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to speak on behalf of our Party on this particular Bill. I did not know that there was an agreement to pass it through all stages immediately. However, after looking at it and seeing the very minor changes which are contemplated in it, I can understand there being such an agreement. I am sure we would all consent to its passage as quickly as possible so that we can get on to other things which are of concern to Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Is the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett) rising on a point of order?