

Government Orders

We did listen to the representations of the various organizations and did take their concerns into account when we prepared the legislation. To say that they told us to do away with the legislation is not the truth. In fact, a lot of people felt there were valid reasons for bringing forth this legislation.

I do not want to repeat what I have already said in my speech. The minister has held public consultations across this land. He has listened to the Canadian people. The Canadian people have told him that they want to see criminals deported as quickly as possible. This legislation does respond to the general sentiment across this country, including Quebec, that criminals who commit crimes in Canada which are punishable by imprisonment for 10 years or more will be dealt with quickly and will be deported to their country of origin.

I do not think that anyone who came before the committee can dispute that fact.

Mr. Hanger: Madam Speaker, just a point of clarification from this member in reference to the search of mail coming through customs.

I ask the member what the government is going to do about the shortage of manpower in the area of customs in order to adequately search for the illegal documents. I am very much aware, as is the member, that there is a serious shortage of manpower to do this job. As the customs union representative pointed out the legislation would be moot. It would be of no value whatsoever.

What is your government going to do?

Mrs. Bakopanos: Madam Speaker, I think the minister has answered that question often enough. He has been asked that question numerous times by the hon. member.

• (1625)

I think what we have said is that we are going to work closely with the Minister of Justice and the minister of public security to ensure that there is seizure of the mail. That question has been answered numerous times.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, there are a number of deficiencies in this bill, deficiencies that were drawn to the attention of the government by witnesses who came and spoke eloquently at the standing committee hearings. These deficiencies were not dealt with and I would like to just deal with those now at some length if I may.

In 1991 The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future released its final report on the state of our country. It was one of the most wide ranging and I might add, one of the most expensive committees in Canadian history. It spent over \$23 million to get the pulse of the citizens of this country. However, it amounted to little more than a very expensive blood pressure check. Thanks to chairman Keith Spicer we were told what we knew all along: that people get angry when they are ignored by their governments.

The Reform Party grew out of this frustration and the fact that

52 of us now sit in the House of Commons is proof that this frustration is still alive and well.

Among its findings, the citizens' forum found Canadians have had enough of this partisan political system that the Liberals enforce and encourage with a passion. According to the report: "One of the strongest messages the forum received from participants was that they have lost their faith in both the political process and their political leaders. They do not feel that their governments, especially at the federal level, reflect the will of the people and they do not feel that citizens have the means at the moment to correct this".

It adds later: "They would like major decisions affecting them to be made in a responsible manner and in a manner that is responsive to both the expressed views and the general well-being of citizens".

Two years later the Liberals promised in their much touted red book to restore respect for government. They said that in the House of Commons a Liberal government would give MPs a greater role in drafting legislation through the House of Commons committees.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, I was looking forward to playing a constructive role in drafting legislation that reflected the needs and the aspirations of Canadians. It was my hope that a new spirit of co-operation would come from this government, a spirit I am always willing to help and encourage.

To me, Bill C-44 was to be a test of this Liberal commitment. Would the Liberals be willing to co-operate with the Reform Party of Canada in making Bill C-44 work? Would they be willing to listen to Canadians on the pros and cons of this bill? Would they be willing to make changes to the bill to account for its flaws and shortcomings? I am sad to say on all accounts they most emphatically were not.

From the very start of the hearings Reform MPs have been faced by Liberal members who have shown neither an interest in working with us in the manner the red book promised nor the respect their peers expect and deserve. After promising to take the high road in dealing with the opposition, the Liberals have suddenly taken a liking to slinging mud at anyone on the opposition benches.

The Reform Party members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and the Bloc Quebecois members I might add have tolerated constant interruptions when questioning witnesses, sarcastic comments in the middle of statements, an atmosphere of unfounded animosity and confrontation at levels never before seen in Canadian politics. I wonder, is this what this new style of government is all about?