

is fundamental that there must exist some technique for forcing the government to submit to the law. If such a technique does not exist, the government itself becomes the means whereby the law is achieved. This is the antithesis of the rule of law. The government is, of course, a large bureaucratic organization, make no mistake; and the more it moves away from the pure doctrine of representative government into the murky area of the corporate state, the more bureaucratic it is likely to become. It is evident, if one views what has happened with respect to our large Crown Corporations, that parliament has lost control of those corporations which in themselves are large bureaucratic organizations.

Setting up a large bureaucratic organization to administer the Criminal Code by order in council is not good enough; and passing a law for allowing the police to wiretap illegally and bug people's homes and offices, and for allowing such illegally obtained evidence to be admissible, is also not good enough.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: The mischief that has arisen to the public from inconsiderate alteration of our laws is too obvious to be called into question. The common law has fared like other venerable edifices of antiquity which rash and inexperienced workmen have ventured to new-dress and refine with all the rage of modern improvement. Hence, frequently its symmetry has been destroyed, its proportions distorted, and its majestic simplicity exchanged for specious embellishments and fantastic novelties such as wiretapping.

We intend to vote against this bill on third reading. We voted against it on second reading. The minister refused to accept our amendments, save two, innocuous in character. I proposed 73 amendments in committee, only to see the minister refuse all but two innocuous ones, as I have said. I shall move no more amendments, but leave it to the highest jury in the land, the Canadian people. They shall know the nature of this legislation which the minister clutches to his chest. They shall know the kinds of gun controls this government proposes and how the minister proposes to snoop, against all the dictates of conscience, into the lives of citizens. That is to be the law of this land, and the people shall know it.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we should deal with a bill as important as Bill C-51 at the end of this session, for the bill will have far-reaching implications for the Canadian people. One wonders why we debate legislation of this sort on July 18. Two things always happen when the hot weather arrives. Something goes wrong with the air-conditioning, a coincidence which does not escape most people, and the government brings forward for consideration at the tail end of the session legislation it has found difficult to get through the House. We are told it intends to proceed with the immigration bill which the committee reported last Thursday evening, I believe. That the government should play games with the House of Commons and the people of Canada is bad. I point out that when the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) appeared on a CTV program last Saturday night, he said it is difficult to get legislation through

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the House of Commons at the moment. He wants an election to clear the air. With the stench that is around that department right now, a change of air would not hurt.

• (1550)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): However, as far as getting legislation through, an election will not solve that problem. Whatever members are here from whatever party, they will want very closely to examine this piece of legislation. Two things concern us in the NDP about this legislation. The first is that we should be considering it in the dying days of the session, when the press and some members have gone home. Those who have not gone home are anxious to get home. They are quite justified in wanting to get home to see their wives and families. This is not the time to be dealing with legislation as important as this.

The second reason we are concerned about this legislation is that it has been framed in such a manner as to put the members of this House in an impossible position. This is a bill in which there are four or five distinct pieces of legislation. The only thing they have in common is that they deal with the Criminal Code. The bill deals with control over the kind of people who can purchase guns, obtain parole, who are classed as dangerous sexual offenders, and it also deals with electronic surveillance. There are members who will agree with some of the clauses in the bill, but not with others. That is why we have repeatedly asked that the bill be broken up.

We in this party have supported the minister in previous years and this year with respect to legislation which would restrict the kind of person who would be able to purchase a long gun. We think it is essential that people able to purchase deadly weapons should at least be able to convince the authorities that they do not have a criminal record, that they are not psychotic, that they are of an age and have had sufficient training to be able to handle dangerous weapons.

The Government has put before us this legislation with respect to gun control. It is a greatly watered-down version of what we had before. I do not think for a moment that it will prevent crimes being performed, or a lot of deaths resulting from the improper use of firearms. All this legislation will do is restrict the purchase of guns after it is passed. It will not do anything with regard to registering the millions of guns already around. However, half a loaf is better than none. I believe this legislation is a first step. It is a very cautious milk and water step. That is what we would expect from this government. They have never been noted for taking a strong stand and saying "Here we stand. We cannot do other". They take one step forward and two steps back. They have done that again with this legislation.

This is weak legislation in terms of gun control. However, it is better than nothing. It will give us a chance to ensure that guns sold in the future will not be sold to people who should not have them. We will develop techniques for registration in the years ahead, in the hope that this legislation will be strengthened even further. We are in favour of legislation controlling the sale of long guns. However, in order to express, in the third reading of this bill, our support for the bill, the