

*Narcotic Control Act*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I hear a "no", so obviously there is not. Technically, it is not a point of order.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate to the Government that we in the Opposition may be small in number, but let it just provoke us. If it wants our co-operation to have this Bill passed as quickly as possible, let it recognize the right of each individual Member of this House of Commons to have the opportunity to speak, but when Hon. Members on the other side try to deny us that right, we will exercise that right.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Blaikie:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make it absolutely clear that the New Democratic Party said, yes, that this Bill could now go to committee and have serious work begin. It was the Liberals who said no.

**Mr. Nunziata:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to make it clear to the House that we in the Liberal Party as well would like to see this Bill go to committee for immediate review.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nunziata:** There will be opportunity, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow to send it to committee.

**Mr. Speyer:** It is not on the Order Paper.

**Mr. Blaikie:** You've got as much class as a bag of nails.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Shall all orders and items preceding item No. 4 stand by unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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### NARCOTIC CONTROL ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR MEDICAL USE OF HEROIN

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East)** moved that Bill C-213, an Act to amend the Narcotic Control Act (therapeutic use of heroin) be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill whose time has clearly come. Perhaps by way of background I can bring the House up to date on the genesis of this Bill. This Bill was first introduced in the House on April 29, 1983 by the then Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton, the late Walter Baker. One of the tragic ironies of the Bill, Sir, is that when it came up for second reading on June 1, 1983, the sponsor of the Bill, the then Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton, was stricken with cancer but did not know it at the time. Indeed, he was to die a few short months later. He has motivated, Mr. Speaker, to bring in this Bill by a personal experience he had had within his own family with someone who was close to him. I suppose there is not an Hon. Member of this House who has not been touched at one time or another by the tragedy of a loved one or friend or neighbour who has come down with a terminal illness and in many cases has had to die a slow, painful and agonizing death.

Unfortunately, at that time the Bill did not get referral to committee. I had the pleasure in the next session of that Parliament, on February 23, 1984, to reintroduce the same Bill. It was then Bill C-221. It received second reading on March 15. The House was moved at that time to allow the Bill to be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

I want to acknowledge now, Mr. Speaker, the support I have received during the course of the debate on my Bill, as well as during the debate on the Bill put forward by my colleague, by the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp), who is now the distinguished Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson), the Hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday) and the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), all of whom are still sitting in this House.

Following referral of the Bill to the standing committee, the committee held its first hearing on March 31 of this year, its second hearing on June 5 and its third hearing on June 7. Unfortunately, it was overtaken by the parliamentary calendar because the session had to adjourn for the summer. I do not want to inject a partisan note here, but it was my view at the time that if the Government of the day wanted to get on with a serious examination of this Bill, we would have had more than three hearings of the standing committee. Indeed, there was no justification, in my opinion, for the committee not sitting throughout the month of June, because there was nothing else before the committee at the time. However, the Bill was overtaken by the parliamentary calendar and subsequently by the dissolution of the last Parliament.

I indicated at the commencement of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, that I felt this was a Bill whose time had clearly come. Let me illustrate. On April 25 of this year, the World Health Organization called for greater attention to the issue of pain management. It is ironic because it was the concern of the World Health Organization, which was expressed in 1954, which resulted in the banning of the manufacturing and importation of heroin for medical purposes. At that time the concern arose because of the growth in the illicit trade of heroin in the world and in the addiction to it. Again, on June