

attitude on behalf of that member of the NDP. I could not understand it at all.

It is not my intention to rebut the Hon. Member for Kootenay West, but rather to deal with this serious threat to Parliament that we face this afternoon. The motion is that debate be now terminated, that the vote on second reading of Bill C-9 take place without any further opportunity for discussion. I am unable to understand the motivation of the Government. The debate seemed to be proceeding in an orderly manner. We have had two or three days' debate on the issue. It has not been excessive. Government Members chose not to participate in the discussion. We cannot force them to if they are not interested in the matter before us. Perhaps they have been instructed to keep quiet. I understand that it is not an uncommon practice on the other side of the House.

Had the motion that the question be now put not been introduced in the House today, there was every likelihood of the debate winding down and being terminated by the appropriate time this afternoon. There would have been nothing to get excited about. That is what would have happened. With the introduction of this tricky move, other Members, on this side of the House at least, will want to make the same statements as me and insist that we debate adequately the question whether debate should or should not be terminated. I cannot see any rhyme or reason for that move.

I would like to have seen debate on second reading terminate this afternoon and the Bill sent to committee where it could be studied in detail. That is the correct process, the process now being cut off by the Government. I am unable to understand why the Government wants to cut off orderly debate and initiate another debate on the question of putting the question. The result will be a situation exactly the converse of what the Government wanted. The result of cutting off debate will be to prolong the debate. It is not for me to judge the rightness or wrongness of the Government's tactics.

This is a very important issue, one that justifiably should be debated in detail in this House. We should not set aside debate at the whim of the Government. We have before us a whole new system of dealing with security matters in Canada. The Bill addresses the various checks and balances that are needed if we are to have a security service. It is a very important piece of legislation because it deals with the relationship between the state and its citizens. Because it is so important, it deserves careful debate. Although it is important, it is not particularly urgent.

The principles involved in the Bill go back to the time of the Mackenzie Commission in 1969 and the McDonald Commission in 1981. If there was no urgency in 1969 after the Mackenzie Commission to bring in legislation, why is there now? Why can it not wait another few hours for debate to expire?

As I said before, the present security service in Canada is doing a reasonable job. I do not say it cannot be improved, but Canada will not go down the drain in the next three weeks if this legislation is not passed. It really does not matter whether the existing system is replaced in one, three or six months from

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now. Although the Bill is very important, it is not that urgent. It is important that we make a very careful study of the proposals and make the correct changes rather than rush into something we might regret later.

So far I have confined my comments to the specific case of closing debate on Bill C-9. I wish to take a few minutes to address what I would say is the general case. Why does the Government always want to cut off and limit debate in Parliament? Why did it use closure 16 times during the first session of this Parliament? Is it just on account of arrogance caused by being in office too long? I will be charitable and surmise otherwise.

I think the real reason this is a consistent practice of the Government is that it has forgotten how to work within the parliamentary system. Instead of legislation being initiated or at least developed within Parliament and parliamentary institutions, nearly all of the new legislation that is brought before us is being generated by and initiated from within the bureaucracy in Government Departments. There have been consultations and discussions but these have not taken place within this Chamber or within parliamentary committees and parliamentarians have not really been involved in that process. They take place within the bureaucracy.

● (1450)

What happens then is that legislation is presented to Parliament in finished form and the Government tries to use its docile and subservient majority to push it through Parliament as a mere formality. Government members want to use Parliament as a formality in the same way as Royal Assent is given to Bills as a formality. In my opinion, Parliament ought not to be just a rubber stamp. We must again become the instrument of legislative initiation. Therefore, Sir, I would suggest that Members should not support this motion and that debate ought to be allowed to come to a natural and not a forced conclusion.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have not spoken on this Bill before, and as my colleague has said, thank goodness I have not because if I had, I would hardly be able to speak again. I do not propose to go over what has already been presented by members of my own caucus.

I know you are aware, Sir, that some time ago the Leader of this Party, in presenting a submission to the McDonald Commission, made it quite clear that this Party and the caucus of this Party supported a civilian security service. But he made it quite clear as well that that support would only be forthcoming if the legislation was properly drafted and contained full safeguards both with respect to oversight and the powers of the agency itself. I do not think anyone denies that there is a need for such an agency to protect the country from spying activities or subversion. The question at the moment is whether or not this particular piece of legislation meets this need and whether or not it provides guarantees that there can be no abuses of the powers that are given.