

Government Orders

there is also the fact that the law may be interpreted in such a way that the intent of the legislator is obscured by semantics and our work here in the House will be for naught.

[English]

Mr. Thompson: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like some clarification. Is the hon. member speaking to the motions in group 4 or has she moved to group 5? I am a little confused.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hon. member is debating motions in group 4.

[Translation]

Mrs. Venne: To continue, Madam Speaker, it is we who are the legislators. In answer to my colleague who wonders where we are up to—I imagine he had had to absent himself—we are indeed still in group No. 4. It is our duty therefore to see that our intentions are respected. The best way to do this is to make them intelligible.

In conclusion, I have a piece of advice to give those drafting texts: they should take a look at the Quebec civil code and our code of criminal procedure in order to learn how to write in French. These are both bold pieces of legislation, the Quebec civil code in particular, whose legislative texts have been able to stand the test of Quebec's changing times, customs and habits without becoming outmoded, ever since 1866. If only out of respect for the francophones of this country, I am therefore requesting that this House support Motion No. 9.

• (1110)

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Saint-Hubert is obviously raising an issue beyond the technical scope of this motion. We have covered the role of French here in the House of Commons, within the federal government. I would like to point out to the hon. member that everyone tries to speak and write proper and correct French.

What I am saying to you could certainly apply directly to English speakers. Sometimes I myself go over and correct texts that have been given me by anglophones, and that are full of mistakes. There are syntax problems, and I often find these texts completely incomprehensible as the hon. member for Saint-Hubert claims happens in French. Unfortunately it seems to be the case for both official languages.

However, I am keeping to this text and to the motion as such. I do not think this is the time to politicize the debate and I do not think this motion has anything to do with the probable results on October 30, which will be, as we know full well, that a majority of Quebecers will vote no.

By deleting the words "serious drug offence", the motion would exclude serious drug offenders from the effect of the provisions on detention. It would defeat Parliament's purpose

in expanding the scope of the provisions on detention to include serious drug offenders.

The aim of this measure was to calm the growing concerns of the public over the persistent problem of drug trafficking. In short, this is to some extent what the work of the legislator is about—making society as we know it safer. The measure is one of the initiatives in the national anti-drug strategy.

Under section 232 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the provisions on detention shall be subject to a comprehensive review by a committee of the House of Commons three years after coming into force—which was November 1992. So, very soon.

This review will be more appropriate for the consideration of an amendment of this scope. I therefore invite the hon. members to vote against this motion and I would like to remind the hon. member that we are always careful in our use of French.

[English]

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of comments. The previous speaker was talking about the confusion in these bills, how they are written and how they are having a difficult time trying to get the same meaning in two languages.

There is one thing on which I can agree with the hon. member. Not only with this bill but with every piece of legislation I see coming from the government, whether it is the Income Tax Act, GST rebates, transportation or whatever it is, it makes sure it words these bills in such a way that a common, ordinary guy like myself is not going to be able to understand everything. We have to hire legal minds to give the proper interpretation. That is one thing to which I certainly object. If we are going to make laws for ordinary Canadians it would not hurt to put them in language that ordinary Canadians can understand.

I have a comment as well for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General who made the comment that now is the time not to politicize. I would like hon. members from the Liberal Party to realize one thing. What they are really saying is: "Let us not get these things on the floor any more than we have to because Canadians might realize what the devil we are doing". Not only do we want to confuse them on how we write laws but let us conduct the business of the House in a manner that anybody watching television really does not know what is happening.

• (1115)

I will take every opportunity I can to try and illustrate what is happening so the people out there will know what is happening. Reformers are the only ones willing to do that. The little puppets in the back row in the Liberal Party wait until the cabinet barks so they know who to bite. We do not operate that way. There are things happening with documents coming through like Bill