

Government Orders

I think it is wise for the House to recall the reality that cabinet moved very swiftly in the spring to present the House with a bill prior to the summer recess so that there could be input for all members of Parliament of all parties in all parts of the country as to whether or not the proposition was going to get the job done.

That, Madam Speaker, was accompanied by a motion to refer the subject matter of the bill, in a pre-study sense, to the justice committee so that that committee could have the resources, in terms of research and help from the House of Commons, to conduct in a more formal way that examination during the summer. That would have passed in a moment with the concurrence of all members of the House or even with the three parties. It was not forthcoming.

• (1140)

An hon. member: Don't let the facts get in your way. You never did before.

Mr. Hawkes: The government would have preferred to have that committee up and running during the summer, but there was no way to get concurrence.

Madam Deputy Speaker: If I may, it would be useful to the Chair if hon. members would allow the Chair what is being said on the floor. That courtesy was given to my left, and I think it should be given to my right.

Mr. Hawkes: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There was a suggestion made at a steering committee of the justice committee, with representatives from all parties present, close to two weeks ago that the justice committee set up a subcommittee for the purpose of studying the subject matter of this bill so it could get on with the job of calling witnesses and making public presentation from knowledgeable people about what is right and what is wrong with this bill.

The opposition indicated that it felt that the workload of the justice committee was such—

An hon. member: That is not true.

Mr. Hawkes: —that it could not handle this assignment in this particular timeframe. Therefore, the government has created a new motion, Motion No. 23, which will set up a special committee of the House.

We will be able to identify eight members of the House who will make it a priority to get on with the business in a formal way of receiving public input from knowledgeable Canadians about what is right and what is wrong with this bill. We hope we can then get on with the process quickly—if we could come to a concurrence in this House—with a piece of legislation that will get the job done the way that Canadians want the job done.

All that is happening is that we keep getting blocked by the opposition.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hawkes: Every time we try to create action on this situation to get on with the protection of Canadian society, we get blocked by the opposition.

We could put it to a test this moment. I make an offer to the members on the other side that we simply accept, without debate or amendment, Motion No. 23 right this instant which sets up the special committee and we will get on with the job. We would then be in a position, if the opposition wanted, to debate for the balance of the day second reading on Bill C-80. Let us pass the motion without debate or amendment so that the action is in place and then get on with the issue of debate in terms of the bill.

There is a proposition that accomplishes what I believe Canadians want to accomplish. It is on the table, and all it takes is unanimous consent of this Chamber to adopt this motion right now. I would ask you, Madam Speaker, to ask for that unanimous consent.

Mr. Allmand: I rise on the same point of order, Madam Speaker. What total incompetence and disorganization.

First, we look at the *Order Paper* for today, Thursday, November 22, and the order listed is Bill C-80. When we arrive at the House, we then find we are asked to debate Motion No. 23, which is to refer the subject matter of Bill C-80 to a special committee.

Now, the House leader of the government is asking us to approve Motion No. 23 without debate, but he says we can debate Bill C-80 at second reading after that is done. I might ask, for what purpose, if we have already referred the subject matter to a special committee without debate. Does this mean that we are going to proceed with