

National Security Measures

ing the Winnipeg strike in 1919, or what happened at Kent State University in the U.S., or anything that happened in the past to guide the committee in arriving at the kind of legislation that may be necessary, then the committee will not be able to do its work. That committee's work will be destroyed before it starts and you will have a Donnybrook at every single committee meeting. The members who want to know the circumstances under which legislation such as suggested in the motion is relevant and should be on the statute books will be illiterate if they do not insist in looking at past events in this country and in other countries in the world.

● (4:50 p.m.)

Let me point out two things the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) said this afternoon. He said the motion derived from the events of last fall. If it derived from the events of last fall, then obviously the events of last fall are relevant to a consideration of the motion.

Mr. Douglas: They are indispensable.

Mr. Lewis: They are indispensable, as the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) suggests. The Minister of Justice said more than that. He tried to place the motion of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) in an historic and philosophic context. I am not quoting him, but the essence of what he said is that we live in an era of violence and confrontation where people are ready to use violence to upset public order. If that is so, and the minister is right, how in heaven's name is the committee to be able to find out what that era really consists of, or is it merely to accept the minister's word?

The minister is not one of the members of the government who acts in this House with any arrogance. He will not expect the members of the committee to say, "John Turner said that we live in an era of violence, therefore that is so". He will expect the members of the committee to want to find out what he is talking about and what constitutes this era of violence. I say that because he related the motion to the events of last fall and because of the historic and philosophic context in which he wants to put this debate. Somewhere in the logic and common sense of this motion we are required to put this authority in the hands of the committee, otherwise the committee cannot do its work intelligently.

For the reasons I have stated, without repeating them, I plead with you to permit this amendment. I believe it is in order because it does not interfere with the substance of the motion, it does not limit that substance or extend it, and it does not touch upon it at all. It merely adds an area in an effort to assist the committee to arrive at the substance of the motion. Surely, that is logical and in order.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, after hearing the mover of the amendment and the N.D.P. leader (Mr. Lewis), I do not intend to speak long.

[Mr. Lewis.]

First, we feel that the main motion is ridiculous and should not have been introduced by the government, since it shows a lack of responsibility. If the government plans to appoint a committee to discuss emergency measures or the opportunity of studying legislation to be passed, we consider the motion ridiculous.

I simply intended to say a few words on the main motion. This motion is evidence of the government's intention not to assume its responsibilities. It had the opportunity to do so at a given time but it failed to do so when the time came.

It seems to me that the amendment introduced by the hon. member if it were adopted would in these circumstances hinder our progress for if we have to investigate the whole of Canada's history, not just last October's events but all the revolutions or pseudo-revolutions which may have occurred in Canada, we shall never see the end of it. If we are to investigate past administrations, there are two parties here in this House that will be the first to object.

If the committee is going to investigate Canada's past in order to better orient its future with regard to emergency measures, it might sit for a rather long period before it arrives at practical conclusions. The committee then will merely fizzle out.

However, since we consider that the committees of the House are of vital importance and that this motion should never have been introduced in the House by the government, we stand firm against it as well as against the amendment. Besides, we will each in our own time have a chance to state our point of view.

[English]

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I see that the clock is approaching the witching hour of five. In order that the Chair might have the opportunity to consider the careful arguments which have been made, and in view of the fact that one or two other members, including the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald)—the Minister of Justice must be anxious to put his position regarding this amendment on record—want to speak, we might slightly invade the private members' hour so that all arguments can be put. The Chair would then have an opportunity between now and eight o'clock to consider these arguments. I therefore urge that the House consent to hearing all the arguments on the point of order at this time and then, if necessary, have a decision rendered when the House resumes at eight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). Is it agreed we continue beyond five o'clock to hear the procedural arguments?

Mr. Jerome: Mr. Speaker, if the opposition House leader is speaking about one short procedural argument there is no problem. If there is a series of arguments to be made, there is a private member's bill which might be proceeded with, unless the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) is prepared to waive the usual procedure.