

Private Members' Business

government does not support the bill. It has made that abundantly clear. I do not know where we go from here.

I am going to put it squarely back on the lap of the hon. member for Erie or whoever else wishes to speak at this time. We have no intention of blocking this bill, and from proceeding further.

Mr. Horner: I do not know on what basis the hon. member states that this party does not support the bill. I believe that this bill should come to a vote right now and be referred to committee where it can be amended. I support the bill entirely. I do not think it is bad legislation. I want to say that the next speaker who stands up will have the voters to answer to because this is a bill that is sorely needed.

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the initiative of our colleague the member for Peterborough who is trying, with this Bill C-210, to expedite judicial proceedings for extradition.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the approach taken to make such proceedings as expeditious as possible. Therefore, I cannot support this bill, however commendable the intentions of our distinguished colleague. I intend to use the few minutes I have to explain to the hon. members present what makes this initiative commendable and more particularly why I cannot support it.

Over the past few years, it has become clear that crime knows no border and that appropriate measures must be taken to prosecute criminals where they committed their crime. I am sure my colleagues will agree with me that when I say Canada should not assume the legal costs relative to crimes committed abroad by a fugitive.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, the fugitive suspected of having committed a crime in the United States, for instance, must be extradited to that country to be tried and, if convicted, serve his sentence there.

Modern means of transportation allow fugitives to easily cross borders and find refuge in a foreign country. Canada prides itself for its open style of government and the fact that all can travel freely in the country. It is quite easy to enter Canada since we promote foreign exchanges and do not go out of our way to make entering

the country difficult. Our fellow citizens who would the first to complain about long line-ups at the border upon their return from abroad.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, this really makes it easy for a fugitive criminal to find refuge in our country and take advantage of the freedoms we cherish and all enjoy.

These past few months, we saw some fugitives come to Canada and try to prolong their stay as much as possible by using all sorts of legal appeals to delay the final decision regarding their return to the country requesting their extradition.

Therefore it became pretty obvious that we should try to limit the means of appeal and to avoid duplication and all the various levels which allow several years to go by between the extradition request and the time when the fugitive can be extradited.

So, Mr. Speaker, we try to keep our borders open while making sure that those who are foolhardy enough to take refuge in Canada will be promptly extradited. I am not unaware of the fact that appeals are necessary for justice to be done but also to appear to be done. I think it would be wrong to think of deporting someone by means of extradition without allowing this person to challenge the legal principles on which this extradition is based. However, we must keep a balance between repeated appeals and a complete lack of remedy.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I consider bill C-210 as a very worthy initiative since its objective is obviously to speed up the appeal procedure in case of extraditions. The sponsors of this bill wanted to keep certain appeals possible while preventing others.

• (1740)

Unfortunately I cannot condone the approach taken in Bill C-210 because, in my humble opinion, it does not meet the desirable goal it had set. You have heard, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues try to explain the difficulties of revising the extradition appeal mechanisms. I have no intention of going back over this, except to say that I do recognize its validity.

Mr. Speaker, by trying to do away with certain extradition appeal mechanisms, we would create even greater difficulties which would make the extradition laws still uncertain for a long period, and this would of course