

Security Intelligence Service

representatives are concerned, they are nobodies who have no say in what goes on in terms of this legislation.

I say to the Government and to the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) in particular that they should not have any illusions with respect to the sincerity with which we approach the legislation. In the course of this debate they will find, if and when we are forced by the Liberal majority to terminate the debate on the floor of the House of Commons, that the end is not necessarily in sight. We will not be pushed around. Whether or not the Solicitor General somehow thinks that his colleagues are out seeking the leadership of that Party, I would like to hear from each and every one of the leadership contestants what they think about this kind of tactic. Do they think the Liberal Party with its majority should be forcing through by a form of closure legislation to impose on Canadians a civilian security intelligence agency with some serious defects? As I pointed out to the Solicitor General, this piece of legislation requires much serious work.

I am not here to be an obstructionist. I have been attempting to find some rational middle ground concerning a full and reasonable examination of the matter in committee. The Solicitor General knows that. I have approached him on a number of occasions asking that a special committee be established to take the onus off the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs which will be faced with an enormous workload. I asked that the special committee have the authority to do some reasonable travel across the country.

I will tell the House why I feel strongly about the power of the committee to travel. I come from a part of the country which is not driving distance from Ottawa. My constituents are concerned about national issues but, in order to participate in the process in Ottawa, they have to travel some 2,000 miles, very often at their own expense. Some people say that they are losing their respect for parliamentary institutions. In Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, when it takes that amount of expensive travel to make representations in person, no wonder there is a sense that somehow parliamentary institutions are not fulfilling their potential. The idea of travelling to Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver, Halifax, St. John's or places where serious Canadians want to participate in national debates to make their input known is a service to these people. If the Solicitor General thinks that he should contain the committee in Ottawa, rush through the process and ride roughshod over the Opposition with a Government majority on the committee, as is the case in the House of Commons, I tell him that he is doing himself a disservice.

I felt that we had an opportunity for making reasonable arrangements with respect to committee consideration of the entire issue. I took the Solicitor General to heart when he said on the floor of the House of Commons that he was prepared to listen to Opposition suggestions. What do we get in response to an Opposition suggestion concerning the handling of this matter by committee? We get closure.

Mr. Kaplan: It is not closure.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I hear the Solicitor General. He knows the effect of the motion that the question on second reading by now put. The Government has the majority and no further amendments can be put. He knows that the callous Government majority will ram through legislation which involves the civil liberties of Canadians.

We have heard much about the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who is now retiring and the Charter of Rights. This will be his monument to greatness. I ask the House to reconsider what kind of government uses its majority to impose closure on a matter of such serious implication as this to the civil liberties of Canadians.

Mr. Deans: A majority government.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Yes, it is a majority government. It is a government which is able to exercise once in a while—and on occasions such as this—great and enormous powers with respect to ramming legislation through the House of Commons. I put the Solicitor General on notice that I will not accept the bona fides of the Government with respect to this matter. There is real reason for Canadians to be concerned about the bona fides of this Government with regard to this legislation and its real intention to accept reasoned amendments to the legislation, to accept any suggestion for improvement, whether it comes from the Opposition or important interest groups in this country.

● (1440)

I rise now to address this Bill on a second occasion, which I did not think I would have to do. I do it with a sense of great disappointment. I do not think we have been unreasonable. Everyone from my Party who participated in this debate made an intelligent and worth-while contribution. I do not think anyone can say that we have been obstructionist or that we attempted to speak just for the sake of speaking. What kind of thanks do we get for that approach to this legislation? We get, I am sorry to say, a motion moved which is tantamount to closure. The people of Canada will remember this when they regard this Government at the time of the next election.

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, I spoke on Bill C-9 this time last week. I was quite content to have had my say at that time. I thought I made some interesting observations with regard to the principles contained in the Bill. I would have been quite happy to sit quietly in my seat and let the debate proceed to its natural conclusion. However, we find ourselves now faced with a motion that amounts to closure imposed by the Government side. I now feel compelled to speak a second time and to point out the wrongness of what the Government is trying to do to limit debate.

The Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen), in his meagre contribution to the debate this afternoon, continued to talk about the principles of Bill C-9, saying that we should not change anything, that it is okay for all of these illegal things to go on and be engaged in by the security service, so long as we do not know about it. I found that a rather funny