

Liberal party and the Progressive Conservative party, could call two witnesses each, and the New Democratic party as well as the Ralliement créditiste, only one each.

If it was true, as the minister had stated when introducing his bill in the house, that this was one of the most important issues that parliament had ever had to consider, I found it rather strange, Mr. Speaker, that there were such limitations on the number of witnesses that could be called before the committee to give evidence on the various aspects of the bill. I refrained from attending the sittings of the committee in order to draw to the public's attention the manner in which the opposition parties' members were being forced to accept without reservations the instructions that the members of the Liberal party seemed to have received from the government.

In order to support this assertion, I should like, Mr. Speaker, to refer to the remarks made by the Liberal member for York East (Mr. Otto) in a letter addressed to his constituents, and I quote:

● (8:10 p.m.)

[English]

If I may paraphrase, the hon. member said he was disappointed in the committee system because committee members were told by the government exactly how to vote and had to vote exactly as the government told them to vote.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, such is the way hon. members on the government side approached the amendments to the omnibus bill that were put forward in the standing committee on justice and legal affairs.

I was anxious to make those opening remarks in order to put in its proper context the problem that faced hon. members who had been given the assurance, when they voted on the motion for second reading of the bill, that the question was meant to refer the bill to the standing committee on justice and legal affairs, where they would be quite free to examine thoroughly each of its clauses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are back in the house after having repeatedly tried to have the committee approve amendments that were completely sound and acceptable to the government.

### *Criminal Code*

For instance, I would like to refer to the amendment I had suggested, and that I intend to move again in the course of the debate, concerning the abortion clause and which is meant to discharge of any responsibility whatsoever a medical practitioner who might refuse to perform an abortion at the request of a female person or one of her relatives.

The Minister of Justice was kind enough to send me the text of another similar amendment which, according to him, was more in accordance with the legal terminology and more agreeable to the committee.

I therefore moved those two amendments, but neither one has been approved by the committee. Government members have voted unanimously against the proposed amendments.

Here again, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Cantin:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In my opinion, we are not discussing abortion but a particular amendment that has nothing to do with it. I think the hon. member should stick to the amendment now under discussion.

When the house will deal with the amendment, the hon. member will then be able to refer to what happened in the committee, but that cannot be allowed at this time.

[English]

**Mr. Hogarth:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. The hon. member suggested that members of the cabinet or of the government directed members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs as to how they ought to vote in that committee. That is just not so. I was a member of that committee and proposed many resolutions and amendments which were not accepted by the committee. At no time did any member of Her Majesty's Privy Council or of the government tell me how I ought to vote in that committee, and I resent as an affront to my personal privileges any suggestion that members of the committee were directed by anyone at all as to what motions they ought to propose in that committee or how they should vote. Anyone reading the proceedings of that committee will see that on many occasions the members of the committee were in conflict with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) in regard to some of the matters that have been proposed in this bill.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.