

notice at second reading that that was our intent. The Minister in response said, "Bring it up at committee". And we did. It was not ruled out of order at committee; it was voted down by the Government majority.

It is therefore appropriate, given that it was considered in order at the committee, given that it is clearly within the scope of the Bill, given that it is simply an extension of the review structure which already exists within the Bill and given that it is intended to place in the hands of Parliament and parliamentarians the responsibility for ensuring that the actions of the security service are indeed actions which it is legally entitled to undertake within the broad scope of the legislation, given all of those things it surely cannot be argued that the Parliament of Canada does not have the right to vote upon that and to make the decision, yes or no, whether we want to assume that responsibility.

I put it to you, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that it would be wrong to deny Parliament the opportunity to assume a responsibility that, at least in part, it believes it would like to assume. It would be wrong to rule out of order an attempt by Members of Parliament to assume their responsibilities. I therefore cannot agree that it is beyond the scope of the Bill. It is not beyond the scope of the Bill. The Bill clearly encompasses the question of review. The method of review is up to Parliament. The Government said there should be a review and the Opposition said the review offered by the Government is inadequate. We are simply asking that the review be expanded to allow parliamentarians to do their job.

● (1230)

I therefore urge upon you, Sir, after careful consideration, that you come to the conclusion that while perhaps at first glance it would have appeared to be out of order, with the benefit of a more careful review, in fact the principle that Members of Parliament be part of the process of review in no way deviates from the main principle of the Bill or, for that matter, in no way takes us outside the scope of the Bill.

Having said that, I leave to your good judgment the appropriateness of the suggestions we have made. We have responded properly to the questions the Chair placed before us. We have attempted throughout this discussion to provide the Chair with an alternative which we believe is both practical in its use of the time of the House as well as ensuring that adequate debate is allowed to take place. Equally importantly, we consider that it would ensure a proper vote on the various clauses of the Bill.

As I said earlier, we will withdraw certain of the motions to delete and we will have provided today a substantial list to the Chair for consideration for withdrawal. I ask in all fairness, since we are prepared to do that, that we not be abused by the process and that that portion of our submission not be the only one given proper consideration. I would find it offensive, quite frankly, if all other arguments we placed before the Chair fell on deaf ears and only our willingness to withdraw certain of the amendments in the interest of the orderly proceedings of

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the House of Commons was accepted. I am sure that will not happen but I say it so it is on the record.

I appreciate your patience in hearing me out, and if we could get a favourable ruling along those lines it would expedite the orderly disposition, through passage or otherwise, of this legislation and enable us to get on with the business of Parliament.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, I sat throughout those many days of committee hearings and I watched this whole process. The first observation any partial or impartial person outside would have to make is that the whole process was handled very badly, indeed incompetently, by the Government and its advisers. Here we are into a procedural wrangle and it would not have been necessary at all had the Government had its wits about it and had the Government's advisers simply followed the rule of law.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are here because the Cabinet made a decision many months ago to have a civilian security intelligence agency. Out of that process came Bill C-157, which was so badly drafted and such a disaster that the Government, even before it came to the House for second reading, had to pull it out and sterilize it by putting it into a Senate committee. They heard dozens and dozens of witnesses and made over 40 changes. Had the Government been competent in the first place, Bill C-157 would have come to the House, had a proper debate with amendments, and it could now be the law.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I invite the Hon. Member to limit his remarks to the suggestion of Mr. Speaker that comments should relate to the grouping itself and not to the relative merits or substance of the Bill, if I may suggest.

Mr. Thacker: I appreciate what you are saying, Mr. Speaker, but you will see as I get into my argument that it will deal with equity in this highest court of the land. It will deal with how the Speaker in his equitable jurisdiction should be dealing with this as compared to the strict rule of law or the statutory rules, although I have an argument on that subject as well.

Bill C-9 comes in, closure is applied on second reading, and the Government now seems to be saying that because something was not dealt with at second reading stage it cannot be dealt with at committee stage. The Government did not give us a chance at second reading. We could not put amendments in when the Government brought in closure, so we have to do it at committee stage. They were deemed acceptable by the chairman at committee stage, fully debated, some were passed and some were defeated. Now we are back at report stage and everyone has the right to put in as many amendments as they want. That is exactly what has happened. Had the Government been able to foresee, as it should have, what would happen in committee, we would not be involved in this huge debate with the loss of all sorts of time.

I would rather be debating the substance of the Bill than a procedural wrangle. In committee Government Members themselves came to realize that much of what the witnesses