

Petitions

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present to the House today. The first petition to the honourable the House of Commons in Parliament assembled relates to the proposed security legislation. The petitioner, a resident of Ottawa, indicates that the proposed Bill poses a profound threat to the civil liberties and privacy of all Canadians. It grants sweeping new powers to the security service, including the power to open first-class mail, target foreign visitors, break and enter and steal, to examine income tax records, medical records, and all other confidential materials.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to demand full and extensive public hearings across Canada on the proposed Bill to establish a civilian security service and that the Bill not be proceeded with before such hearings have taken place. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

I have another petition signed by a resident of Ottawa with respect to the proposed security legislation, expressing concern about the unreasonable closure of debate in committee and at second reading. It notes that the Bill poses a profound threat to the civil liberties and privacy of all Canadians in that, despite the strong recommendation of the McDonald Commission, the committee refused to provide for any parliamentary oversight committee to prevent the service from becoming a political weapon in the hands of the government of the day.

Wherefore the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call on Parliament to demand full and extensive public hearings across Canada on the proposed Bill to establish a civilian security service, and that the Bill not be proceeded with before such hearings have taken place. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

I have the honour to present a petition signed by a resident of Ottawa who is expressing concern, as have the previous petitioners, with respect to the—

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member tabling a petition signed by a single individual?

An Hon. Member: That is what he said.

Mr. Speaker: If the Hon. Member intends to proceed with a series of petitions signed by single individuals, I suggest he might be able to indicate the general nature of such communications and provide them in summary form to the House.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): My understanding of the rules is that the petition need not be signed by more than one individual. Certainly I am proceeding in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. Evans: Who was it signed by? Svend Robinson?

Mr. Speaker: If the Hon. Member has a series of petitions dealing with the same subject matter, he might be able to indicate the general nature of the subject matter.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Chair would not in any way want to impair the right of citizens of this country to petition the House of Commons. In accordance with long-standing precedent, which I certainly would be pleased to cite if the Speaker is in any doubt as to procedural acceptability, I am proposing to present a petition to the honourable the House of Commons in Parliament assembled which, as do the previous petitions and others, Mr. Speaker—because there is a great deal of public concern with respect to the subject matter of the petitions I am presenting—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member cannot make a speech. I have invited him to indicate the general subject matter and file his documents. I am well aware that if the Hon. Member is going through the device of presenting documents signed by individuals and citing at great length the nature of the communication, this can be a very time-consuming procedure indeed, if that is his objective. But I invite the Hon. Member to indicate the nature of the communications, summarize them, and file them with the Clerk.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): I know the Speaker would not want to impute motives to any Member of this House.

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): I am presenting a petition to the honourable the House of Commons in Parliament assembled. The petitioner in question is expressing grave concern with respect to the proposed security legislation, in particular that it would deny access by the proposed Security Intelligence Review Committee and the Inspector General to Cabinet documents in possession of the security service, making this—

Mr. Speaker: If the Hon. Member has a series of petitions dealing with the security legislation, he might indicate the general subject matter without repeating or reading essentially the same material time after time to the House.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I certainly was not repeating the material. This was a petition relating to one particular concern of the petitioner with respect to the process of review which is contemplated. I certainly had not dealt with that prior to this time. I will summarize, however. The petitioner, in light of the concern expressed, is calling for full and extensive hearings to deal with that concern. And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

I have the honour to present a petition from a concerned resident of the Ottawa area with respect to the long-established, ancient and undoubted right to present a grievance. This individual wishes this grievance to be brought to the attention of this House with respect to the proposed security legislation. The petitioner notes that despite the fact the security service opened files on almost one million Canadians, the Bill would allow the new service to target thousands of individuals who have broken no law whatsoever but who fall within the sweeping scope of the definitions in the Bill. It also