

## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby-Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on February 7, over 500 members of the RCMP marched for the first time in history here on Parliament Hill to denounce the attempt of the Liberal government to deny them their fundamental constitutional rights to free collective bargaining and in fact to even punish them for talking about collective bargaining. **(1915 )**

The next day I asked a question in the House of the Solicitor General. I asked him to explain why the government intended to proceed with Bill C-58, legislation that would clearly deny the most basic rights of members of the RCMP.

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At that time the minister stated that the bill does not add to the powers of the commissioner and it does not take anything away from members of the force.

The bill has now gone to committee, has gone through committee and has been reported back to the House. What is very clear is that statement of the minister suggesting the bill does not take anything away from members of the RCMP is completely and utterly false.

What the bill does very clearly is deny and override the effect of the 1994 judgment of the Federal Court in the Yvon Gingras decision. Pursuant to that decision it was clear RCMP employees are guaranteed certain rights under the Public Service Staff Relations Act. In other words, the commissioner of the RCMP was not free to simply rule arbitrarily with respect to all working conditions of members of the force.

In addition there is a strong argument that part II of the Canada Labour Code, the provisions with respect to occupational health and safety, are guaranteed now prior to the bill to members of the RCMP.

The effect of this legislation, this draconian bill, is to take away those existing rights. The bill may as well dramatically affect entitlement to other benefits, to other entitlements such as the bilingualism bonus which will now be completely discretionary.

The current provisions of governing labour relations within the RCMP are totally unsatisfactory. The divisional staff relations representative system has been vigorously condemned by among others the E Division Members Association from British Columbia and the C Division. I want to pay tribute in particular to the president of the E Division Members Association, Michel Funicelli, and members of his executive.

*[Translation]*

I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Gaétan Delisle who has been fighting in Quebec for some time now for the rights of members of the RCMP stationed in that province.

*[English]*

Also the Canadian Police Association and its executive officer, Scott Newark, who have worked long and hard to expose this attack on the basic rights of members of the RCMP.

I am calling today on the government to realize it has made a mistake, to come to its senses and to back off on this legislation, to allow members of the RCMP to make their own decisions about their future, about their labour relations.

This bill would eliminate any possibility of third party intervention in employee-management relations. It would basically put all power in the hands of the commission. It is a bad bill. I call on the government to withdraw it now.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Burnaby-Kingsway says Bill C-58 will if passed deny RCMP members collective bargaining rights.

RCMP members have never had the legal authority to enter into collective bargaining. How can they possibly be denied these rights by the passage of this bill if the right is one they never had? He is misleading the Canadian public when he makes that statement. They have never had the right to engage in collective bargaining. Therefore they are not being denied these rights by this bill.

Collective bargaining is not a natural or inherent right but a right granted by Parliament. Collective bargaining rights have never been extended to RCMP members under either the RCMP act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act or the Canada Labour Code.

The Solicitor General has repeatedly said Bill C-58 has one purpose and one purpose only, to confirm the status quo that existed before the Gingras decision and with regard to the management of the RCMP.

**Mr. Robinson:** Point of order.

**Mr. Milliken:** The hon. member knows there are no points of order during the adjournment debate.

That continues to be the case. Collective bargaining is a completely separate issue from Bill C-58 and would have to be looked at by both the government and Parliament as a separate matter. The RCMP already has its own labour-management forum for members to raise and discuss issues of concern regarding forced management.

Created in 1974, the RCMP division staff relations representative, the DSRR program, was intended to respond to concerns expressed by members for greater involvement in management issues. That program has proved to be successful and workable-despite the assertions of the hon. member for Burnaby-Kingsway-at which members at all levels can voice their opinions through representatives elected by the force's general membership across Canada, regardless of rank, category or grade.

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Each division elects at least one full time representative and two part time representatives. These people met three times with the Solicitor General in the last 14 months. They continue to

meet. The system works well and the RCMP members are represented well at those meetings with the Solicitor General.

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