

## **C-51 Anti-terrorism Act, 2015**

February 23rd, 2015 3:48 p.m.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to this bill, though many of my colleagues in the House who would also like an opportunity to speak to such an important bill that mixes security and freedom will not have one because we are under time allocation.

Bill C-51 makes it very clear that the Prime Minister meant what he said when he remarked that we would not recognize Canada when he got through with the bill. The party of one will make sure that this country is not the same after his reign is finished. We will not recognize Canada after Bill C-51 is made law and used for many years. We will not recognize what this bill can do to Canada, including today when we stand to speak about a couple of jihadist threats that have potentially occurred in Canada and speak about the bill in that regard. We will not recognize what the bill would do to Canada because it will come in the actions of CSIS over many years, as CSIS uses its new powers to work in Canadian society and, through Bill C-44, in various ways abroad to change the very nature of Canadian society.

The Conservative Prime Minister has demonstrated time and again that disagreement is not something he tolerates or understands. In fact, we heard the former Public Safety minister Vic Toews call environmentalists eco-terrorists in 2012. The current finance minister, in his time as natural resources minister, basically made the same kinds of remarks.

We live in a world where we know that we have to balance the environment and the economy and where those questions require debate, disagreement and, many times, civil confrontation. Now there would be a new set of rules. It is hard to think that that type of interaction could in any way be a threat to national security when we talk about how we are balancing what we do in this country between the environment and the economy, but that is quite clearly laid out in this bill. It underlies this bill.

This bill would likely create even greater divisions and alienation in our society than exist now. That is generally what happens when there is more authoritarian and secretive behaviour in society, with more opportunities for collusion under the law to take out the people who are not liked or the people who are somehow thought to be threats to Canada.

When one views the government's actions and words of concern about environmentalists, it is understandable that many Canadians are starting to speak up about Bill C-51. Yes, the initial poll showed that a lot of Canadians liked the idea of security against terrorism; but did they understand what was in the bill, and are the Conservatives allowing them to understand that by continuing this debate in the House of Commons? No, they are not. They are closing the debate down because they know darn well that as this debate continues and things come out, others will ask for a better bill and a better understanding of the nature of what the Conservatives are proposing.

To be specific, Bill C-51 threatens our way of life by asking Canadians to choose between their security and their freedoms. It asks Canadians to choose, but the Conservatives do not actually ask Canadians; they simply put this bill forward, apply closure, and send it through committee in very little time. That is what will happen.

A bill like this should take time. We should be at it for months, maybe a year, getting the bill right. We do not have any rush. After Air India, we did not change anything for many years. We did not have significant problems. We are not having significant problems today.

Bill C-51 was not developed in consultation with other parties. That is very much the case. This thing was brought up in a very big rush after October 2014, as we heard commentators from the Conservatives Party say here today.

The bill irresponsibly provides CSIS with a sweeping new mandate without equally increasing oversight. Actually, there is no oversight; there is review, and we need to keep those separate. There is the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which is not an oversight committee but a review committee that looks at things the agency has done long after it is finished. Oversight says more immediacy. The Conservatives say that a judge will do that, but only if CSIS takes it to a judge. In many cases, they may not.

I want to talk about threat disruption, which is an interesting subject. When we think of groups that may be formed to do something the government opposes, like environmental action, CSIS might say, "Then if they might do something unlawful in the future, perhaps we should get involved right now to deal with threat disruption. Maybe we should put a CSIS member into that organization. Maybe we should undermine the organization first before it becomes a problem". That would fit under the law. That is called threat disruption. If we disrupt something before the unlawful action is taken, how can anyone prove there was unlawful action? This works both ways. We can disrupt people now because we think in the future they may do something wrong.

The bill does not provide anything to make our society work better. The bill does not do anything to build communities, to build understanding—absolutely nothing. It is all secretive. It is all behind the scenes. There is nothing here that says we have a job to do in our society to bring people together.

When we look at the promotion of terrorism, how can we judge that? How can we judge the promotion of terrorism? What is incitement to terrorism? Is it someone saying that their son or daughter has been injured, that they are angry about it and that they do not like what the government has done. Is that incitement to terrorism? What is being suggested in this?

Quite obviously the government has made the bill so large that it simply cannot answer those questions today. How will we answer them in the future? It will only be through the actions of what happens here. If we have oversight by parliamentarians, we may have a chance to control some of the bill going forward. If we do not, then we will rely on non-elected individuals to determine what the bill does, and that is simply wrong.

Why do we not deal with this in a better fashion than what the government has proposed to do? Why did we go in this direction? The party of one is responsible for this. The Prime Minister would not come into Parliament and stand to speak to the bill. He chose to do it somewhere where he did not have anyone to criticize him, to ask him questions. Why would someone make such a large effort to promote the bill without that type of commentary in the House? I really find that wrong-headed, but it is more the style of this Prime Minister, the party of one.

Clearly, we oppose the bill. We will continue to oppose the bill because it is not done right. It will not protect Canadians. It will affect their rights in the future. We do not understand exactly how it will affect their rights, but it will do that without the proper oversight of parliamentarians.