

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

that any information they accumulate can be, at any moment, made public, then efforts at investigations into, for example, organized crime, will be seriously hampered. The confidentiality of contacts in such a case is vital to the ability of enforcement agencies to monitor situations and obtain information. We depend on co-operation among police forces, as well as public co-operation with the police for the effective administration of justice and law enforcement. If private information, given in confidence, can be made public at will, public confidence and the public's co-operation in good faith can only be lost and channels of communication blocked. We must not violate the faith of the public in such a manner.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to refer to the extent to which I have come to know the police force in my hometown of Oakville, in the riding of Halton. Working with them I gained a great deal of respect for them and came to realize what some of their problems and concerns are in terms of dealing with organized crime and using information effectively—and that means confidentially. I realize their feelings about such matters as the peace and security legislation, Bill C-51, that is on its way through the House and, in particular, the wiretapping aspects of that bill.

I have known these policemen since we were all very young, and I know them to be people of great integrity, sensitivity and discretion, yet in this particular case they plead very strongly to have representations made, through their member of parliament, for example, in order to ensure that they have enough power to work with. Wiretapping or electronic surveillance would help them cope with new, powerful and sophisticated areas of organized crime and would help them to protect the Canadian people under their responsibility. I see a parallel here and that is why I find the debate today so interesting. The cases are analogous and I have no hesitation in pleading for some reasonable and sensible restriction of the availability of information so that our law enforcement agencies can do their job properly on our behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again I should like to thank the hon. member for Red Deer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this motion for the production of papers has been described by the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Philbrook) as a technical matter. He gave an explanation that would be suitable for a newly graduated lawyer.

Mr. Philbrook: That's not bad for a doctor.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I think lawyers and the medical profession have learned that the best business is gobbledygook. To bring before this House all the traditions of parliamentary procedure as an excuse for not responding to the motion of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) is an act that demands plain speaking. I want to put it to the hon. member for Halton that he should listen to the facts and decide in this always grey area whether the

[Mr. Philbrook.]

purely technical answer he gave to a technical problem is not a cover-up for a very evil-smelling operation.

● (1720)

Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lee: Yes, let's hear the facts first.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I have before me a document the contents of which I shall read into the record. The hon. member for Red Deer seeks information. In this case we know what we want and know what is in the documents. That is not the point. The document in front of me comes from the court in Saskatchewan. Let me give some background to the document.

During the 1974 election campaign, Liberal supporters, employed by a government agency, the Prairie Farm Assistance Act agency, or PFAA, engaged in certain political activities in the hope of electing to parliament Liberal members in the three western provinces. I knew what was going on and asked colleagues in this House and one member of the NDP to watch what was happening. Sure enough, those Liberal campaign workers made a mistake. Mr. Speaker, they were not doing these things for the love of the Liberal party. They were doing it to make money. What was the source of the money? It was not the taxpayers of Canada but a fund belonging to farmers. It was accumulated over the years when a 1 per cent fee was charged on farm sales to elevators.

Mr. Paproski: Somebody was engaged in a little hanky-panky.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): This \$11 million was the source of the money these people were to get. They were to steal from that fund. The day after the election, several of them—and we have evidence concerning five—asked their supervisor to pay their expenses. The supervisors refused, because they had been sent a letter, as had these individuals, saying there was to be no political activity of any kind in the period immediately before the election. But these men ignored the directive in that letter and were observed not to follow its directions. When the supervisors refused to pay their expenses, the next day after the election they told them, or someone in that office, they were going to phone a certain man in Regina appointed by this government and now sitting in front of you as a Privy Councillor to Her Majesty. When the telephone call was made, this man said, "Ignore that supervisor. Send me your expense forms. I know they are fictitious and against orders, but I will sign them and you will be paid". And they were paid.

If you consult the records of this House, you will find that I, to some extent, and the hon. member for Red Deer to a greater extent pushed hard to draw this matter to the Auditor General's attention. The Auditor General reacted immediately. His staff were in there, broke in and took photographs of the particular documents. The hon. member for Red Deer and others exerted pressure for this matter to be drawn to the attention of the RCMP fraud squad. The hon. member acted