

an attitude, we, on the other hand, should make sure that a good eye is kept on it and that changes be made if need be.

There is another excerpt that makes me wonder and, in my view, argues for monitoring. It says that, while the RCMP is responsible for enforcing the law, CSIS collects information and provides operational or tactical advice on individuals, groups or activities that may constitute threats to the security of Canada to enable the government and police authorities to act.

It would be important to know what they mean in that kind of agency by "groups or activities that can constitute threats to the security of Canada". I could be of the personal view that what constitutes the greatest threat to the security of Canada is the way the country is run, a view the government would certainly not share. The agency may consider that such or such political party constitutes a threat to Canada, as seems to have been the case. That too is unacceptable.

So, based on the experience of past abuses by the RCMP and the attempt to remedy the problem by establishing CSIS, one critical step remains to be taken: we must get to the bottom of the matter and know everything there is to know about the agency, its mandate, the way it carries it out and all this information must be made available to the people in whom the public has placed its confidence, that is, the elected members of Parliament.

Some may say that reports are made to the Solicitor General CSIS activities, but these reports are confidential. We can understand that certain aspects must remain confidential, that certain matters must not be debated publicly, but reports could be submitted in camera to a parliamentary committee responsible for ensuring that things are done according to the law and depending on the circumstances.

I will give you examples of reports filed by the SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which are classified secret or top secret. That is how they are classified. They deal with security screening on university campuses. It is rather important to know why this kind of agency is involved in security screening on campus. Is there another witch hunt on? Is what happened in the United States 30 or 35 years ago going to happen here now? What makes one person on campus a threat to the security of Canada and not another? There may be very clear-cut cases as well as abuse. We need to make sure appropriate control is exercised over all this.

• (1535)

There is another study whose title in itself is so ambiguous, it would be worthwhile to look into it. I am talking about the CSIS regional studies. What do they need regional studies for? Did they find that the people living in a region where the unemployment rate reaches 20, 25 per cent are more dangerous than the residents of a community with an unemployment rate of 10 or 12

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per cent? What is in these studies? These are things we should be able to look into.

There is another document I would like to mention, namely the review by SIRC of CSIS activities involving Aboriginal Canadians. Why should Aboriginal Canadians be the subject of separate investigations? Why are such investigations being conducted? When they told us the titles of these studies and said they received studies on this, they suggested that there were specific reasons for investigating these groups, that is, university campuses, Aboriginal Canadians and various other groups, although there is no evidence that the report eventually submitted contains any accusations. All we know is that there was an investigation.

It is a little like when someone is accused of something in a newspaper, only to be acquitted three months later. The acquittal headline is one inch high while the accusation is announced in two-inch-high letters but the effect is the same. The decision has already had a negative effect, which I think is quite unacceptable.

I would like to give you another quote from the public report which outlines what we should expect in the future. It says that in general, the world has become less predictable and the power, more diffuse. It means that our society is undergoing all kinds of changes so that the people monitoring them must follow global developments closely and be able to understand exactly what they mean.

Without judging the quality of SIRC's current membership, it can be said that the current situation is rather hard to accept because some of these people have been appointed on the recommendation of parties sitting in the House of Commons during the last Parliament. No Bloc or Reform member was involved in appointing these people. SIRC members have very few links with the current Parliament, even with the Liberals, because most of them were appointed from the Tories' list.

For all these reasons, I think that the government should agree to the opposition's request so that we can meet the goal set when CSIS was founded, namely to achieve the most appropriate level of transparency in the delicate field of security and prevent past excesses from occurring again in the future, especially now that Canada faces major political challenges. The democratic debate must in no way be undermined by institutions exceeding their mandates.

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I find it very strange that reference is again made to history being a guide to what will happen in the future. To be sure, the United States had the McCarthy affair and the Rosenbergs. France was involved in sinking Greenpeace's ship, the *Rainbow Warrior*. We have seen all sorts of abuses in other countries but nothing like that has happened here.