

Mr. Speaker, it is not because the Prime Minister denies it or because the Solicitor General said there has not been any surveillance or that other ministers say likewise that we must conclude that it never happened. This is not the first time this government has denied certain facts, Mr. Speaker. One must recall how lightheartedly, as recently as earlier this year, the former solicitor general, the member for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes (Mr. Fox) was saying certain things — and how he was eventually forced to say just the opposite. One must recall how strongly the then solicitor general denied the involvement of the RCMP in L'Agence de Presse Libre break-in in Montreal and that later it was proved it had actually happened. One must recall how strongly the ex-solicitor general denied that for several years the police had been carrying out infiltration activities till the time when he was compelled to confess it because the facts and circumstances had been ascertained.

So now when the Solicitor General or the Prime Minister claim that such things have not taken place, Mr. Speaker, it almost amounts to giving us the assurance that they actually happened. In defence of our constituents' freedoms, we have a duty to do everything in our power to prevent this country from becoming a police state, where our traditional freedoms would be hindered by all sorts of fears of interference from above into the individual's private affairs. This is so serious, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot allow these facts and circumstances to go unchallenged, without a committee of this House inquiring into the matter. We must know the motives, the reasons, the causes behind such a system of surveillance.

As evidenced by the Prime Minister's statement made earlier, and the confirmation from hon. members opposite, clearly the attempt is to sidestep the basic question with the suggestion there has been no electronic surveillance.

Mr. Speaker, the type of surveillance does not matter. We must know the real motives, the real reasons, the real causes for initiating as I said the makings of a police state, in this land we are so proud to call a free country. This government is responsible for that. We also have to know how to explain to the people the actions of this government. The suggestion that this has been done for 30 years is no answer. Those who have been in power for ten years, those who are perceived as the people in authority have no right to wash their hands of things so unacceptable. It is either one or the other, Mr. Speaker: either the Prime Minister and the government are responsible, and consequently they know what goes on in this country and are aware of what the police do, or they are not responsible, in which case it is high time we call upon the people to solve the problem democratically.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we must know what the facts are and see clearly where we stand about this whole thing, so that the people can be guaranteed the most fundamental rights of freedom. Let us note once again, I want to stress the point, that there is a huge difference between the acts that interfere

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with freedom and the regular activity of a police force that is noble, worthy, that is simply keeping peace and order in a given society. It is all too difficult, as the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise) pointed out, to try to determine where there is subversion, to leave it to the discretion of a government that has proved beyond any doubt that is the champion of disunity and discord in this country. The situation has come to that. It is none of our doing, but we know that the government failed in its responsibility and that at some point it felt it had to make up for its lack of real moral authority over the country, and so let the police perform acts that are clearly "antifreedom". There is nothing surprising about that, but it must disappear. It is becoming a sickness we must get rid of immediately to restore a wholesome and free climate in this country.

● (1612)

[*English*]

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to participate in this most fundamental question of privilege until the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) intervened this afternoon. I should like to make only a few comments because those who participated today—and I was not present in the House on Friday—certainly covered many of the points which give me concern.

In part answer to the Prime Minister, the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) indicated that, regardless of what the practice has been for the last 30 years, the creation of a security and analysis branch within the Department of the Solicitor General assumes a different character. That branch is to analyse and/or give direction from time to time respecting what was considered to be normal police practices up until the creation of the branch.

I have followed the debate, as well as reading *Hansard* dated April 28, 1978. Today the Prime Minister mentioned a practice which has been in existence for 30 years. As other hon. members have indicated this afternoon, that begs the question as to when these instructions were codified, and/or defined, and when they came into practice.

As we are all aware, there is no great fundamental final code which makes parliament tick. There is the British North America Act, as well as customs, traditions, and practices. Obviously there are practices respecting police work. I do not know what the situation was for the last 30 years. I was not a member of parliament 30 years ago. In those days there were prime ministers who paid their price by taking chances on many issues at the polls from time to time. Perhaps this was not an issue because it did not come to the public fore.

I was not bemused, in fact I was disappointed by the Prime Minister's intervention today into something so fundamental as the question of privilege advanced by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield). He attempted to use very specious arguments in something which is fundamental. I am present in the chamber today as a member of the thirtieth parliament. There has been the long parliament, the short parliament, and