

Emergencies Act

How changeable are they? Would it be four years before they reversed themselves again, or might they reverse themselves in one year? I think the public needs a chance to compare what they said four years ago with what they are saying now. Could the Hon. Member for Burnaby give us some examples?

● (1630)

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Spadina for that question. It gives me an opportunity to elaborate on what was the position of the Conservative Party in 1983 and 1984. I might say that I recall well the exceptional work and contribution made by the Member for Spadina during the debate on that particular legislation creating CSIS.

At the time this legislation was before the House, the Conservative Party was in opposition and it raised vigorous objections to the Liberal Government's proposed definition of threats to the security of Canada. Conservative Members voted against the definition and supported amendments which I proposed. Indeed, they proposed amendments themselves that would narrow the definition.

There are a number of examples, including subsection (c) of the definition in the CSIS Act which states: "Activities within or relating to Canada, directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political objective within Canada or a foreign state".

It was pointed out, for example, that a church group which wanted to support the African National Congress or a liberation movement in Central America by holding a rummage sale to send funds to that particular group would be deemed under this definition to be a threat to the security of Canada. Clearly that is a dangerous definition and one which gives far too much power to CSIS.

As well, there is the whole question of "foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada". That provision has been used by CSIS to attack the peace movement in Canada.

The Conservatives spoke in the House and spoke in committee, saying this definition must be changed because it is a threat to the civil liberties of Canadians. They also said that we need a safeguard in the Bill, and parliamentary oversight of CSIS, with a parliamentary committee similar to the congressional committees in the United States. They called for that parliamentary oversight.

The Conservatives have been in Government for over three years. We now see the sorry spectacle of a Conservative Minister standing up and defending that Liberal legislation, which the same Minister was attacking when he was an opposition Member. That is a sorry spectacle and one of which I think Canadians should be well aware as they evaluate this legislation.

The Conservatives are effectively asking Canadians to trust them. They are asking Canadians to trust that these powers will not be abused. I do not believe that their record warrants that kind of trust. On the contrary, the labour movement in Canada, for example, has every reason for profound mistrust of the record of the Government when it comes to intervention in a heavy-handed and undemocratic manner.

I want to close my response by referring to the report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee on this question. The committee has stated that CSIS too readily accepts the foreign policy objectives of the United States as our own and it neglects Canadian policy. It states that CSIS is expanding money and effort on too many counter subversion targets and intruding on the lives and activities of too many Canadians in this area.

Instead of bringing forward legislation that would grant even more powers to deny civil liberties, as this legislation would do, I suggest that the Government should be moving forward to limit the sweeping mandate of CSIS, to ensure that law abiding Canadians are not subject to the abuse of their rights and civil liberties as they are today by this agency of the Conservative Government.

Mr. Manly: Madam Speaker, I was interested in the Hon. Member's reference to the shameful internment of the Japanese and the expropriation of their property. He pointed out that this was motivated on the one hand by political expediency and by racism on the other. Ken Adachi in his book entitled *The Enemy That Never Was* provides some very vivid testimony from Mackenzie King's diaries as to both those points. He points out that at the time of Pearl Harbour Mackenzie King wrote in his diary that the Government had considered at some length the fact that it believed the Japanese nationals and Canadian born Japanese were loyal and did not constitute a threat. That was the belief of the Government at that time. It subsequently acted in a very expedient way, giving way to the kind of hysteria that prevailed in some parts of Canada later on.

As far as the racism is concerned, later on in Mackenzie King's diary he expressed his gratitude that the atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese rather than on the white races of Europe. That shameful part of Canadian history is something that all Members of this House want to repudiate.

Given the wide powers that we have in Clause 38 of the Bill, is it possible that if it were in place in the 1940s, even with the reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that kind of shameful event would have taken place in Canadian history?

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the answer to that question is yes, it is possible that that kind of abuse could occur. Indeed, the issue of compensation is another element of the legislation that raises very serious questions. In effect, the compensation will be determined by the federal Government. There is no appeal process other than to an