

attention to internal subversion. We sought those instructions, but we have not been able to get them. However, that is not the point I am making this afternoon.

Instructions within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to certain designated personnel, relating to the surveillance of candidates in elections, came to light last week. On Friday the minister indicated that in fact the RCMP does not exercise any surveillance. If they check the list of candidates and find a name which is already in their files, then they become interested and place it in their files. Some of us are quite concerned about the security forces' definition of the words "subversive", "security risk" or "security interest" in this connection. From this document, it seems to be very broadly conceived as genuine. It relates to candidates; in some to their agents; and in other cases to their contributors. It includes any candidate who is considered to be a separatist, whether he is a subversive, separatist, or otherwise. Our concern is that we just do not know how sweeping is the definition of "subversive".

Also, the document refers to government requirements. It points out the request for names of nominated candidates is not so much directly for security purposes as it is to meet certain statistical requirements and government requirements. I do not know what the term "government requirements" means in that connection.

● (1512)

I do not know what the RCM Police do with this information when they find somebody who is in one of their files and who has been nominated as a candidate. What do they do with that? Why do they have this particular interest in that file? If somebody is nominated and they feel he is a security risk, what happens after that? Do they merely make up a file and that is as far as it goes, or is some initiative taken in the course of the campaign? I do not know, but I do not like the way matters stand.

As I say, there is a question in this document of the broad definition of security risk; there is a question of what is meant by government requirements, which are referred to as the reason for these instructions, and there is to me the very disturbing question as to what happens in connection with a candidate when his name is found to be on one of their files. With respect, sir, these have to be matters of concern to this House, and I think the existence of the document and these instructions do impinge upon the privileges of this House. This issue should be clarified by being referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections. If you believe I have a prima facie ground for doing this, sir, I would so move.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I intend to add very little to what was said in this debate on Friday by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) and the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais). The hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) has referred to the War Measures Act and the events of 1970 in a way which would, once again, reinforce the impression that was earlier erroneously given that some-

how these instructions were given to the police as a result of those events.

I would like to repeat what was made abundantly clear, it seems to me, on Friday in the House, but in the absence of the hon. member for Halifax. It was made abundantly clear that this practice has been going on for at least 30 years, that it has been the practice of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to be performing such duties before elections at various levels of government administration. Therefore, the practice existed not only under my predecessor but under the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert, under Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. Mackenzie King.

While the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) has criticized our attitude, that the government of the day should not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the police, I do remember him saying that when he was Prime Minister he knew everything which was going on in the police. He is not here to speak today, but I merely make that suggestion, and he may want to deal with this point at some other time. However, if he is correct in saying that he knew everything that was going on, presumably he knew about these instructions.

I can say unequivocally that I did not know, because I do not make it a practice, as the House well knows, to involve myself in the day-to-day operations of the RCMP. Either the right hon. gentleman knew about it or he did not, but the point is it has been a practice for at least 30 years, in spite of successive administrations. However, I have been able to give the assurance and to repeat it unequivocally, that no member in this House, since I have been Prime Minister, has been the object of security surveillance without his consent, and in so far as it concerns the members of this House there is obviously no question of privilege. In so far as the practice in general is concerned, it would seem to me that, since it has been going on for at least 30 years, the proper course would be not to make it the subject of partisan debate but to refer these concerns to the royal commission.

Mr. Blais: They already have.

Mr. Trudeau: I am told, Mr. Speaker, by the Solicitor General that they already have been referred, and as a matter of fact I believe that the existence of this practice was made known to the McDonald commission.

I realize the urgency in the minds of the members to get to the bottom of this. I repeat, if it has been going on for 30 years without prejudice to the members of this House, one would think that it would be to the advantage—

Mr. Fraser: How can you say "without prejudice"?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member from Vancouver asks how I can say "without prejudice." I repeat, no member of this House, since I have been Prime Minister, has been the object of electronic surveillance by the RCMP in security matters.

Mr. Fraser: To your knowledge.