

While being questioned by the chairman of the CRTC, he read the Broadcasting Act to me. At that time he seemed to begin to understand what it really meant. When he had finished he asked what I thought it meant. I said that as far as I was concerned, it meant providing service to these people. The decision they handed down was to put in French television. I fully expected that would happen. However, they also said:

In this regard, the commission notes that the corporation's discussions with the government with a view to taking positive action to deal with this matter are now well under way.

However, very little has been done. Every once in a while they send in technicians to talk to people there. They really are not doing the job that should be done under the accelerated program. I have a letter here from the people of Rock Creek, British Columbia. Nothing is being done for them. The letter lists the names of 571 people living within a five-mile radius of that community. Instead of looking after these people, the government rushes in to supply costly French television service for a far smaller group of people in another part of my constituency.

Another area about which very little has been said is transportation. Very little has been done by this government in that area. I am very concerned about railway line abandonment. The CPR has abandoned the old Kettle Valley rail line. They have applied to the CTC to have it abandoned in its entirety. I went through the motions of finding out what happens to rights of way when rail lines are abandoned. I found that they revert back to the railway.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne, as we all know, included a commitment to principles which I, as Solicitor General, strongly share. Of more interest to me is the goal of enhancing the rights and freedoms of Canadians through adherence to the principle of open government. This objective has, of course, very direct relevance to all of the agencies for which I report to parliament, but in particular to the RCMP security service.

Since the establishment of the royal commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice McDonald, a high degree of public interest has been evidenced concerning the role of the security service. I want to avail myself of the opportunity provided by the debate in response to the Speech from the Throne to review some developments that have occurred since the establishment of the royal commission earlier this year. But first I would like to review the mandate of the security service and its role in Canada today.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, since the Great War, the RCMP, in its capacity as federal police corps, has been the main body responsible for security investigations and operations. Under section 18 of the act enacted in 1959, it is the duty of RCMP officers to carry out all responsibilities entrusted to crime prevention officers as far as violations of the Canadian law and

of the law of any province where they may be employed are concerned. Indeed, in addition to the functions and responsibilities defined in the RCMP Act, the force has a duty under its governing regulations to create and operate the intelligence and security services that may be required by the minister.

So the mandate of the RCMP's security service must be put back in the context not only of the duties of every police officer, but and mainly of those described in the various instructions and directives issued from time to time by the minister or the government concerning the investigations to be held in matters of national security. So the security service deals with security as a whole, as well as intelligence matters and relevant police operations. Furthermore, it maintains and scrutinizes files, performs personnel investigations, advises the various departments on security matters, stores files and performs certain other functions related to the management and planning of national security operations.

This has been clearly and publicly stated in the report published in 1969 by the MacKenzie, Coldwell and Pratte Commission. It should be remembered that the first and almost sole threat to international and national security, after World War II, during the cold war through the following period has been perceived and described in ideological terms. At that time the opponent was easy to identify. For that reason, there has been a consensus among government circles and the majority of Canadians on the desirability of and need for internal security operations. The Gouzenko case also brought forward in the public's minds the requirements of security with our own country. My predecessor and myself have reviewed from time to time the operations of the security service.

These revisions were suggested by a changing Canadian and world environment that lead government authorities to bring security operations into line with current realities, with inside and outside influences that had an impact on Canada's security and national integrity.

To illustrate the process we have gone through, Mr. Speaker, let me suggest that only 20 years ago terrorism, sabotage, kidnappings and political murders were not a current occurrence in the world. In 1963 we went through our first wave of terrorist activities in contemporary Canadian history, marked with bombing incidents, hold-ups, thefts, property damage, bodily injuries and murders that culminated in the sombre hours of the October 1970 crisis.

● (1242)

[English]

Terrorism, be it national or international, as hon. members are well aware, has become one of the most critical problems of this decade. The toll it has exacted, both in human suffering and destruction of public and private property, has been enormous. These, however, are not the only costs. This phenomenon of politically motivated violence has forced almost all governments to adopt measures, be they security measures at airports or domestic security surveillance programs, which lessen the over-all freedom of us all. It would be both irrespon-