

*Routine Proceedings*

I wonder about this excerpt. Are we going back to the good old seventies? This could well be the case. I would have liked to know when these investigations were conducted, who was targeted, and in what province they took place. What legitimate protest triggered these investigations?

As long as we have an external review committee with no democratic control over targeted intelligence activities, the risk of bias will always exist.

Members of the external committee are not elected. There is no parliamentary control over intelligence activities and, in spite of what the Solicitor General said earlier in his speech, I find this situation extremely dangerous.

When we have a real report, a report with real questions and real answers, then we may be able to make more constructive criticism. What we have right now is an extremely important organization, important enough not to have to come before elected representatives. We were elected and these people do not even have to come before us to explain what they do exactly. Moreover, in these difficult times when the government keeps saying that we must tighten our belt, it spends \$228.7 million and we cannot even see how the money was used.

Until we have a real report with real answers, it will be very difficult for the opposition and for democracy in Canada to come to a conclusion on this.

[English]

**Mr. Paul E. Forseth (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs I am pleased to respond to the minister's statement on the tabling of the annual report of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

In the public's view of CSIS there exists an inordinate secrecy about its general operations and an apparent lack of accountability to the government and the Canadian community it serves. This report tabled today does not assuage legitimate public concerns about the underlying assumptions of the existence and the operational philosophy of CSIS.

We are in a time for governments when business as usual is not good enough. The government of the day is being forced to recognize that basic reviews of social programs and general priority setting of departments will happen one way or another.

It can be done in a rational way or by disjointed incrementalism. It is like rushing, putting out fires so to speak, when the crisis of finance and popular political support implodes upon the sleepwalking government as it stumbles along toward a new Canada of new international, fiscal and democratic realities.

• (1540)

When we come back to look at CSIS from this side of the House there is an increasing uneasiness about the aspects of a

government bureau that spends a fair amount of public resources to in effect maintain an image while at the same time satisfying the self-serving interests of insular survival at a time when all else in government is under fundamental review.

We are in social service review and, more closely to CSIS, the military establishment will be undergoing a white paper review process. Certainly it is also time to ask this government about CSIS, its mission statement, its performance results measured against its own goals and mandate laid out in the previous annual reports and the legislation.

There has been fundamental review before but we need more than the current committee oversight process and annual reports.

I have been 21 years in provincial public service and I have come to appreciate how government bureaucracy can become focused on its self-importance and develop a driving agenda that is so right for those on the inside while it is losing the proper connections with those it was originally created to serve.

From the opposition chairs, from this side of the House, from Her Majesty's loyal constructive alternative, I want to ring the bell of this government again on the community accountability issue for CSIS. Members of the Liberal cabinet may think it is business as usual, they may think they have the traditional Canadian divine right to govern, for after all they are the Liberals. It is a new Canada of more open and accountable government that is the standard required.

The pre-Confederation reformers' agenda of responsible and accountable government beyond mere representative government has finally come of age and is represented by a new wave of Reformers in this House. We question the business as usual attitude, the annual report of CSIS which really tells this House nothing much about what goes on there. The public report is a good press release but justifies nothing.

I am quite aware of the difference between the operational confidentiality required for the organization to be effective and the new higher level of ongoing accountability that citizens are coming to demand of government which in so many areas this government has not comprehended, being stuck as it is in old Canada thinking.

CSIS is said to look after security intelligence, national security enforcement and national protective security. The 1994 report is said to provide a window on security intelligence. I think it is a very small window and not large enough to let the light in of effective accountability.

CSIS is mandated to perform a difficult job, formerly done by the RCMP which led to a national scandal and the resultant creation of CSIS as a solution. One wonders what the 1994 scandal will be—cigarettes? I do not have any alternatives to present today.