

*Supply*

**Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General):** Madam Speaker, does the hon. member realize that the review committee can enter any office or public institution and visit all the premises, examine every document, voucher, or file in that office or institution? I get the impression the hon. member did not quite understand when the Solicitor General said the review committee has the same powers as a royal commission of inquiry.

I do not see any purpose in having a royal commission. Since members opposite always complain about duplication, why should we have a royal commission? We already have a review committee, the SIRC. We all know that SIRC was created precisely to investigate allegations such as those made recently.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Madam Speaker, I thought that, after one year in Parliament, the hon. member would have lost some of the illusions he still seems to harbour.

**Mr. Gagnon:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I object to that personal remark. I asked a question and I want to get an answer. Let us leave character out of this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Order. The hon. member knows that no reference to another member's character should be made in this House.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Madam Speaker, I apologize if I insulted the hon. member, but nevertheless, that is what I think.

• (1155)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I believe that the hon. member knows what he is saying, since his words are very well chosen. I ask him to withdraw them.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** Which ones? He made two objections. Does he want me to withdraw the expression "I think" or the comments that I made on him?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** I consider that the member has withdrawn his words.

**Mr. Gagnon:** You know, Madam Speaker, the Opposition member is still a good devil. I rise today to speak on this motion.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I believe that the member just attacked me by saying that I am a devil, whether a good or a bad one, but still a devil. I would ask the member to withdraw his words.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Does the parliamentary secretary withdraw his words?

**Mr. Gagnon:** Madam Speaker, I did not use them pejoratively.

**Mr. Bellehumeur:** I accept the hon. member's apologies.

**Mr. Gagnon:** As I was saying, I rise today to speak on this motion which, as the solicitor general mentioned, involves a certain number of problems and misunderstandings. It seems essential to me that the members of this House understand and fully appreciate the complex and sensitively ordered system of checks and balances that is part of our national system of security intelligence.

Also, that system is designed to ensure a balance between the protection of individual freedoms and the need to protect the Canadian public against threats to the security of their country. Most people will agree that we must protect Canada against threats to its security and that this protection requires a security intelligence agency.

There is no doubt in my mind that Canada needs a security intelligence service, as all other industrialized countries do. Let us take for example the threat that terrorism involves. Canadian democracy is based on a climate of freedom and political objectives are met through open discussions, debates or other legitimate activities toward lawful advocacy.

However, that climate, as well as public safety, is jeopardized when an individual or a group is trying to meet those political goals through violence or threat of violence.

In the 1980s, terrorism became a major concern for safety and the government gave CSIS the mandate to gather, on a priority basis, security information on terrorism. Our first line of defence must be information.

The other thing which is threatening us is espionage. Since the emergence of nation-states, espionage has become part of everyday life. Every nation is striving to improve its position within the international community. However, we have to admit that even if the political scene is better world-wide, some nations still resort to deceptive or clandestine activities for the purpose of enhancing their international position.

Canada must protect itself against such threats, whether they take the form of traditional espionage or of any other means of illegally obtaining the technological know-how of this country.

• (1200)

Canada must also be able to identify and to thwart steps taken by foreign countries or agents seeking to secretly influence or harass our ethnic communities. Again, we must protect those who have elected to settle in Canada and make it their new homeland.

Here also, the gathering of good intelligence is at the very heart of our first line of defence. I am convinced that the CSIS Act is an efficient piece of legislation, enforced according to the wishes of Parliament set forth ten years ago. The CSIS Act provides a legislative framework likely to ensure the delicate balance between efficient national security and the respect of