

Privilege—Mr. Stanfield

ment because, again coming back, with all respect, to something that the parliamentary secretary said, no member ever came to this place who did not at one time offer himself as a candidate. It is pretty artificial to try to make a valid distinction, particularly at election time, between members of parliament and candidates. We all come in the same way, some of us leave by different routes, but at the same time I think this is not a valid distinction.

● (1602)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, as this debate is going on, it is easy to understand the significance of the statement published in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* a few days ago and the question of privilege and the motion raised in this House by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield). We realize this is a very important issue which I think concerns not only hon. members but also all those who seek or will soon be seeking office.

I disagree completely with the statement made by the Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) to the effect that no member is or has been under surveillance since his or her election, but he made a difference between elected members and candidates. Mr. Speaker, I believe that all official political parties must select their candidates according to their own criteria. It has been said, rightly so I believe, that we should do our utmost to attract good candidates who could use their qualifications to improve the administration of public affairs in the Parliament of Canada. Mr. Speaker, if those candidates who are not or have never been elected feel they might be under surveillance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for any reason, those people will avoid running for a political party knowing that they would be exposed to that kind of trouble.

The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) said on April 28, and I agree with him, that it was very difficult to give an accurate interpretation of the word "subversive", but who among the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and those responsible for that police force is going to define "subversion"? Who is going to define the word "subversive"? They say in certain circles that someone subversive might attempt to destroy the basis of the society and the economy of a country. If this is the definition of the word "subversive", the Prime Minister, his cabinet colleagues and all Liberal members could be accused of being subversive if we consider the situation presently facing Canada. Canada being on the verge of bankruptcy, they could be accused of being subversive because they attempted to undermine the economic basis of Canada and destroy the Canadian economy.

So who is going to establish the definition of the word "subversion"; it is a serious risk. Some policemen can believe that the actions of certain persons might represent a danger for the government. For others, it might not be the case, but

[Mr. MacKay.]

we have been told that there has been a manual since 1970. We have been told also that this surveillance system has existed since the mid forties. I suppose it was established following the events that occurred in 1946.

Mr. Speaker, we should be very careful with that decision and I do not think it is wise to use the McDonald Inquiry Commission as an excuse and say that it will study all that situation, and I think that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections or another committee of the House should be in charge of reviewing the matter and throw light on that subject and inform the House of Commons and all members and all political parties of the situation. So I agree completely with the motion moved by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) and I think it should be adopted.

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this motion derives its importance from the fact that it relates to the basic freedoms we must protect as representatives of the public here in the House. Mr. Speaker, when we stand up for ourselves as members of parliament and of course as candidates initially, we are standing up for public rights as such. Of course we recognize that order and social peace are necessary and therefore there must be laws and police corps to maintain them.

Mr. Speaker, we know particularly from the experience in some countries that we must be wary of any regime which would let its police establish an embryo of dictature, and without wanting to make things look worse than they already are, we must nevertheless admit that we have here in Canada an embryo of police state and, in this respect, I would have the same reservations as the right hon. Prime Minister had himself when he stated—I will if I may quote from an article published in the magazine *Cité Libre* of March 1961. That article is several years old, but I do not think the Prime Minister changes his opinions as he changes shirts. The Prime Minister then expressed his abhorrence for any type of police state. Referring to that article I wish to quote Pierre Elliott Trudeau, back in 1961:

We do not have to ask ourselves what kind of fruit Jean Drapeau's party would give us: the strong supporter of today's nationalism has just made it known to the private bills committee that he prefers a police state to a state dominated by the criminal element. Not me, for against the criminal element I have the law on my side to put an end to its domination; but against the police and the kind of dictatorship it would support I could only rely on my freedom which would soon be lost.

Mr. Speaker, I will not go as far as the Prime Minister back then in saying that I prefer the criminal element to the police, I would simply say, Mr. Speaker, that I prefer the rule of justice, the rule of true freedom, that which gives the individual the possibility of evolving the way he wants towards the common good. There is presently no justification for interfering into the private life of an individual for whatever reason. This is what leads me to strongly support this motion.