

of surveillance by the security service of the RCMP since 1968.

I wish today to deal with those concerns and dispel any doubts that privileges of hon. members of this House may have been infringed.

Immediately upon reading the article on Wednesday I convened a meeting attended by senior members of the security service. The allegations referred to in the article were raised, and the existence of the documents confirmed. I then read very carefully their contents and had the opportunity to get acquainted with and discuss at some length the process outlined in those documents.

During Wednesday's question period, and again during the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Halifax, I referred to those documents as being related to national security and indicated that they referred to procedures which were the subject of review by the McDonald commission.

I would now like to deal with the first issue raised in the hon. member's motion. Contrary to what the motion states, I did not refuse to provide information with respect to surveillance of candidates by security forces. I merely pointed out repeatedly the sensitive nature of the documents and their review undertaken by the McDonald commission.

● (1222)

I am pleased to review the procedure followed by security forces as it relates to candidates during an election.

When the names of candidates seeking office become available to the security service, a name check is conducted against a list of persons known to belong to subversive groups or involved in subversive activities. If and when a candidate is positively identified as falling into that category, the fact of his candidacy is duly noted, and the security service continues to be legitimately interested in his or her activities. The security service has no interest in the other candidates, and the fact that their candidacy is brought to the attention of the security forces does not result in the initiation of any inquiry and surveillance of those candidates.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, I can reiterate to this House that no person who has been a member of this House since 1968 has been the subject of surveillance by the security service. As I indicated earlier to the House, and to the hon. member for Halifax on Wednesday, and in this instance refer the House to page 4888 of *Hansard*, this assurance had been given previously by the Prime Minister and by my predecessor.

As to the second issue raised in the motion, I never contended that the "McDonald commission was the only vehicle to investigate a question affecting the privileges of all members of the House of Commons." I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that no member of this House would advance that proposition.

I repeatedly stressed in previous statements to the House that the procedures contained in the operational manuals were the subject of review by the McDonald commission, and that, being relevant to security service operations, were not discussed openly in the House. Throughout my answers, and in

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reply to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Halifax, I always referred to the procedures as being reviewed or under study by the McDonald commission, and again I never gave an indication that none of them could be discussed in this House.

I think that all members of this House realize the necessity of the existence of a security force. I am sure that the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) was stating the position of all members of this House when, in a letter to my predecessor on August 12, 1977, he raised that particular issue, and I quote:

In a free society, it is foolish to argue that no security forces are required. Both our own history and that of the modern world in general have revealed the existence of small groups committed to the use of violence in pursuing their objectives. No serious democrat can ignore this reality. Security forces have then a democratic mandate to monitor such groups as a means of ensuring civil order.

The mandate of the security service is one which is in accordance with the objectives seeking to protect our democratic institutions in this country. No candidate is the subject of surveillance because he adheres to a legitimate political party. But members must realize that if anyone in this country is acting contrary to the interests of our nation by advocating undemocratic means or violent means to attain their goals, those people then become legitimate targets of our security forces.

And this is where, Mr. Speaker, every member of this House, and every citizen of this country sharing our belief in our democratic system, must understand and realize the importance of countering activities which, under the cover of legitimate organizations, seek to undermine the basis of that very system.

I believe that the Prime Minister in his answer to the Leader of the Opposition last October stated very clearly the position of this government and the role of the RCMP when he said:

No person in Canada is immune from observation, surveillance or detection, if it is determined that such person has been or is engaged in activities that are defined in the Official Secrets Act as being subversive.

I am certain that members of this House share the concern of the government in ensuring that the political process not be interfered with by known subversive elements intent on weakening or even destroying our national democratic institutions. The political parties represented in this House will not stand for such an infiltration.

I therefore submit, Mr. Speaker, that there is no question of privilege.

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, first of all I believe that the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) has cleared up one aspect which formed the subject matter of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield). If I understand the Solicitor General correctly, he has now confirmed that questions in this general area may quite properly be put in this House from time to time. That was one aspect of the concern of the hon. member for Halifax.

Secondly, the Solicitor General has confirmed the existence of documentary material generally called, I believe, an opera-