

Protection of Privacy

system of government, without protection of our cherished freedoms, we will not have a way of life. So, we have a conflict with human freedom on the one hand, freedom of self-expression, freedom of privacy of expression and the absolute necessity to maintain the system so that we can indeed have that freedom of expression.

I suppose one of the things that is bothering hon. members, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of government we have had, especially since this parliament resumed last January. When you look at the Solicitor General you wonder whether he is not an "over the wall" Solicitor General. There have been so many leaks with the prison system that you begin to wonder whether he is the right man to be involved in authorizing warrants to allow someone to do some snooping. Be that as it may, I know he will not be the Solicitor General long and perhaps we will get a better one. I suppose it is necessary to have some minister appointed to give these authorizations. I am sure the minister has fairly competent people in his department. The administration of the department leaves a great deal to be desired.

● (1230)

The clause we are considering draws a fine line. It distinguishes between questions having to do with the protection of individual freedoms and questions having to do with the security of the state. In the past, there has been real as well as apparent danger to Canada. I refer hon. members to the incident which took place immediately after World War II involving Gouzenko. As I recall it, a member of this House was involved in an espionage matter.

Without doubt, some foreign governments do not pay much attention to our ideas of freedom of expression and freedom of thought and are prepared to use all kinds of devices in order to learn what is going on in Canada. They are prepared, perhaps, to break down our economic system and our system of democracy. Although our political system of democracy may not be perfect, it is the best system we have and we do not want to jeopardize it. So, we must be eternally vigilant in monitoring the activities of foreign powers operating within our country. It is necessary for someone in authority in the government to keep a very close eye on the activities of foreign powers, including our neighbour to the south, a great power, and the power of the other side of the Arctic circle. It is imperative that we know what their representatives are doing in Canada. If, therefore, it is necessary for us to undertake electronic snooping or counter-intelligence work, that work must be done.

The bill goes further than that. It provides for monitoring activities to be undertaken in order to prevent a change of government in Canada or elsewhere through the use of violence, force, or other criminal means. We are aware of the activities of the FLQ, which thought it better to bomb mail boxes than speed up the delivery of mail. Any government which is responsible for the security of Canada must keep track of these people and others who might be described as mental cases.

Some nations keep track of certain undesirables by putting them behind barbed wire or in cages. We cannot authorize that. If the rights of all, including those of

[Mr. Blenkarn.]

minorities, are to be protected in Canada, the government must know what is going on in the country. It must be aware of the activities of those persons whose whole aim is to destroy our society and attain their ends by revolution. We can change our government through the use of a ballot. We put a simple X opposite the name of the candidate of our choice. We must not allow those who would destroy, with guns, bombs and fire, the very basis of our society to carry out their aims. They would create disruption for the sake of disrupting and destroy our system and all our freedoms. Clearly, it is necessary for the activities of such people to be monitored.

The bill, as amended by the committee, is specific with respect to controlling the use of warrants authorized by the Solicitor General. I am referring to the possible infringement of individual rights which might be occasioned by monitoring. Unfortunately, the amendment of the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) goes a little too far. I understand his attitude. I suggest that the amendment, if passed, would control the activities of the Solicitor General more tightly than necessary. Although I do not have a great deal of confidence in our Solicitor General—as I said earlier, we shall see a new solicitor general shortly—I submit that the amendment is not really necessary and is not really in the interests of this country. As this matter had been fully explored in committee, I am surprised that the hon. member should have brought it before the House at this time. For those reasons I, personally, will not be supporting the amendment.

Sir, in view of what has been happening in the world in terms of hijacking of aircraft, bombings of department stores and shooting of innocent children in other countries of the world, I submit that it is essential for the government to keep itself informed and know what is going on in this country.

If the government had known what was going on in the country prior to 1970, perhaps it might not have been necessary to invoke the War Measures Act. Indeed, it became clear after the War Measures Act had been invoked that that action was not necessary. Nobody was convicted under the act; nobody was even accused under it. Certain people were charged under the regular provisions of the Criminal Code. If the Solicitor General and police forces of this country had kept a proper eye on what was going on, I submit it would have been possible for us to arrest and charge certain persons who were engaged in notorious activities in the province of Quebec, and there would have been no need to invoke the War Measures Act. The government and the police did not know what was going on. The government was frightened to heck and invoked the War Measures Act.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member, whose time has expired. He may continue, of course, with the unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Two minutes.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I had just about wound up.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has received conditional approval to continue.