

—activities directed toward accomplishing governmental change within Canada or elsewhere by force or violence or any criminal means;

I want to offer to the House my conviction that that section is a very grave part of the Official Secrets Act. If we are to proceed in our modern society with more and more intrusions of privacy, more and more suspensions of civil rights, then I think it behooves us to amend the Official Secrets Act to take the necessary legislative steps to ensure that it is a court and not a politician who will give the final approval by law for the opening of mail. Unless we do such things, we will not have the adequate safeguards that many members of the House have been calling for.

I come now to the comments made by the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan). He is a distinguished member of parliament and he is also chairman of the justice and legal affairs committee. His contribution to the debate which was made a few days ago I would take quite seriously. He approached this very question as to whether there ought to be a provision in this bill for a court order in cases involving national security as distinct from the approval of the Solicitor General himself. He said that argument could be advanced on both sides. He said it is a narrow decision. We must consider, on the one hand, that the courts are the traditional protectors of our liberty; on the other hand, allowing the Solicitor General to have the final say on mail opening in national security cases would bring us more ministerial responsibility. The hon. member said it is better to put the onus squarely on the government.

In my view, the member for Windsor-Walkerville missed the point when he presented the equation in such terms. He argued that because this is sunset legislation it will expire a year after the McDonald commission report comes in, and we all know that is a long way down the track. It may be 1985 or even much later than that. In any event for a considerable period of time we will have a law allowing the Solicitor General to express final approval concerning national security cases. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, this arrangement is opening the door even wider to political control in individual security cases.

I would not say the member for Windsor-Walkerville was very strong on the side of the bill. He seemed to be ambivalent, but he finally went over to the side of supporting the bill, giving the Solicitor General the final authority. He asked us in so doing to express our confidence in ministerial responsibility. It is that very question that I am unable to answer satisfactorily to my friend the hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville. I cannot give my confidence to this government. I think I would be reluctant to give it to any government, but certainly to this government after witnessing the conduct of the various solicitors general, including the present one who has been stonewalling the House on answers to legitimate questions.

The government has been blaming the RCMP for the government's own mistakes. Innumerable copies of documents have been leaked. Now we find the hon. gentleman for Matane (Mr. De Bané) saying he is opposing the bill, offering his conviction tonight that the public is not at all convinced that there are adequate institutional mechanisms for the protection

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of privacy in this country. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Matane, in expressing that opinion tonight, is absolutely right.

The very least that should be done is to amend this bill in committee. We should do away with the section on national security entirely. After all, what evidence has been brought before the House that it is absolutely needed now? The weight of the Solicitor General's speech and the entirety of the Postmaster General's speech was on the subject of drugs. Nobody on this side of the House is advancing a counter-argument that we do not need it. We are willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. The hon. member for New Westminster was not very convinced.

I think most of us are ready to give the government the benefit of the doubt on drug cases, to accept that legislation is needed and will probably do some good. No one has satisfactorily explained why we should need it for national security cases. Therefore, in the absence of a strong argument I think all the more opposition ought to be exerted against giving the Solicitor General this monopoly of power. I say that we ought to go after the drug pushers and we ought to do everything we can do fight crime. But in so doing we must answer what has now become for me the classic parliamentary question that we face in this debate. Genuine steps must be taken against terrorism, against crime, against all those factors of modern society that are making our world a dangerous place.

● (2112)

We want to do the right thing to protect society. At the same time, we want to protect civil liberties. We have to find a way to do both. We want to do this job that we as parliamentarians have the very serious responsibility to do. We want to do it in a way that can secure the safety in society which the citizens of Canada expect us to legislate without opening the door to political control in the violation of privacy. That, then, is the question that is involved as we discuss the principle of this bill.

We want to fight crime and protect civil liberties at the same time. Only a court can ensure that we will do this, not politicians. It is imperative that before this bill comes back for third reading this most objectionable feature of the bill be removed. If it comes back without having been removed, I and many members of this House will have a great deal of difficulty giving it any further approval.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for just a few minutes to confirm the position of this party which was indicated some days ago by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt).

It is our feeling that we must vote against this bill at second reading. I can state our position briefly and clearly. Indeed, some of the arguments that I might have liked to have made were presented very effectively tonight by the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané). I congratulate him on that excellent speech.