

Criminal Code Amendment

Then the reader is offered a "wall contact listening-in unit" which the catalogue describes as follows:

The battery operated unit will enable you to listen to conversations through walls, etc. No need to run wires to "bug" a room, simply place the unit against the wall and the conversation will be heard through the super-sensitive earphones that are provided.

● (5:10 p.m.)

This, Mr. Speaker, is available for \$69 if you would like to send in your order to Criminal Research Products Inc., in Pennsylvania. I have other catalogues here advertising other similar exotic devices and some of the names of these devices are almost as exotic as the devices themselves. For instance there is the Tiny Tattler FM voice transmitter, only half the size of an L&M cigarette pack; there is the Little Sentry, only one-sixth as large as a cigarette package, and there is the Tiny Tim FM voice transmitter. These are all readily available not only to Americans but to Canadians, not only to police but to private citizens.

The technology of snooping has developed to such a degree that really the future of snooping is unlimited under our law, or rather our lack of law. I understand solid state transmitters can now be made about the size of a postage stamp, and not much thicker. Eventually they will need no outside power source because they will be able to draw power from the electrical energy which is put out by regular broadcasting stations. Some of the new laser beams and sonics will be fully adapted to snooping. So, Mr. Speaker, we are certainly entering, if we have not already entered, an era of electronic anarchy.

I know that the Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) has told the house, and some spokesmen for my own party have said in previous debate on this subject, that we should wait, that we should not investigate this field at the moment because it is undoubtedly being considered by the Royal Commission On Security. I cannot accept that suggestion. Quite possibly this would be a valid subject for consideration by that royal commission, but for all we know it may be months or years before that commission reports. In the meantime this "despicable invasion into the right of privacy," as it is described by the chairman of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Commission, persists and grows more serious day by day.

I see no reason why this bill, and perhaps the other bills which are on the order paper dealing with the whole question of invasion of privacy by wire tapping and electronic

eavesdropping, could not be referred to a committee, possibly the committee on justice and legal affairs, on the express understanding that it not delve into the security aspects of this problem at the present time. It seems to me an abdication of the responsibility of this parliament to watch the development of this very serious intrusion into one of the basic rights of the citizens of a democracy without at least conducting an investigation into its extent here in Canada.

For the past year such an investigation has been going on in the United States senate, and hon. members will be aware that the President of the United States has asked congress to pass a bill outlawing wire tapping and electronic eavesdropping entirely, except in investigations into matters of national security. Personally I am not sure that we should go that far. I am not sure that we should be even as restrictive as I have suggested in my bill. It may well be, as other hon. members have suggested on other occasions, that there are more minor offences where this means of detection and investigation should be permitted to the police. But, Mr. Speaker, it is incontrovertible that this is a serious problem for our society, that it is something which parliament surely must investigate in the hope that some remedial measures will be undertaken just as soon as possible. Surely we cannot afford to wait for the report of a commission which has only just started to sit.

Parliament lately has been too often accused of being very energetic and resolute in throwing itself into tackling the problems of the past. Here is a problem of the present which is so basic to our democratic concepts that it threatens to destroy them if we in parliament do not tackle the problem soon. I appeal to hon. members, and most particularly to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) and the Solicitor General, who unfortunately are not in the chamber, and to their colleagues in the government, to recognize this threat to our individual freedoms—to recognize it by asking this house to have the subject matter of these bills referred to a committee so that there may be an opportunity for the public as well as for hon. members to familiarize themselves with the nature of this most insidious problem, before it has proceeded to the point where all of us will regret we have neglected our duty on this most modern form of intrusion into the rights of Canadian citizens.