

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

there was nothing unusual in the situation; and that was the attitude of the government right up to the very last day.

It will be recalled how question after question was directed first to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), when he admitted that the films of his department were no longer being made by this board, and later to other ministers. In an effort to find out what information the government had in regard to activities which caused sufficient concern to cause to be withheld from that board such relatively simple productions as those described, these questions were asked.

The attitude of the government was that this was simply an ordinary screening. Then we learned through the press a short time afterwards that a new film commissioner had been appointed to the national film board, and that he had been asked to take that position some three weeks before. Thus we learned that, while the House of Commons was still sitting, and while we were trying to get information as to what the government knew about this department, and were left with the impression that there was nothing positive they could tell us, they had information sufficiently positive to make them decide to change the commissioner of the national film board and to have a housecleaning in that government agency.

Just to emphasize the fact that the government has a great deal more information in its possession than it has given to the house, in spite of the repeated questions, the Minister of Justice only last week stated that communist spies are operating in this country and that the government is taking action to deal with the situation. It is strange how necessary it seems to be for the elected representatives of the people to depend upon our very excellent press for information they seek in the house, and to which they are entitled, in full detail, in the house.

In view of the gravity of the international situation, and the lessons taught by the admissions of Dr. Fuchs, this house should insist that immediate steps be taken to prosecute any spies known to the government. If the government knows that there are spies, then there should be prosecutions. If the government does not know who the spies are, then the Minister of Justice was just talking through his hat; it is one or the other. Action in regard to this menace is long overdue—action to restrain the subversive activities of the communist party in this country, in accordance with the recommendations received by the government long ago.

This statement of the Minister of Justice serves to emphasize the failure of the government to act upon the recommendations in the

report of the royal commission on espionage. Do not let the government place any cloak of virtue about itself for those prosecutions. It is necessary only to go back to the record to find how difficult it was to get the government to act on that occasion, and to realize that it was only under pressure it acted, even then. But the government did not carry out the details of that report. It did act upon the positive findings that there were grounds for prosecution against certain individuals implicated in a spy ring directly related to the Russian embassy here in Ottawa. But the commission also found that there were other spy rings—and this House of Commons has a right to know what has been done in regard to those other spy rings. It has also the right to demand that the government act upon the recommendations made in that report to deal with possible communist activities within government agencies themselves.

There was one recommendation to the effect that there be careful consolidation of all supervision of that kind. Yet, if the house was correctly informed during the last session, there has been very little in the way of an effective method of dealing with this important subject. The report certainly made it imperative that these activities be dealt with in a way that would be in keeping with the seriousness of the disclosures made in the report. What may have appeared urgent then becomes doubly urgent now, in the light of recent events. If there are secrets in this country which are of sufficient importance that certain government agencies are denied the right to deal with them because of suspected communist activities, then there are added reasons in these last few days and weeks why the most vigorous and effective steps should be taken to deal with subversive communist activities in every part of Canada, and of every kind. The whole tendency has been to minimize the importance of this subject. Certainly we are awaiting information as to what action has been taken in keeping with the seriousness of the disclosure.

In the meantime communist activities are going on apace and wide open. Although communist publications are being permitted to circulate the most outrageous statements about Canadian public men, there is no apparent attempt to act under existing laws which are being broken, to say nothing of the necessity of more effective provisions in the Criminal Code, to deal with subversive activities of this kind. It will be recalled that there have been repeated requests for an amendment to the Criminal Code which will make it possible to bring before our courts those who are engaged in an organized effort to destroy our free democracy. Having regard to the seriousness of the statement made by