

Security Intelligence Service

We have heard some of the comments that have been made by Attorneys General and others across the country and we cannot help but think that we in this Party do not stand alone in opposition to the content of the Bill which we now see before us. We know, for example, that the Attorney General of the Province of Ontario, the province I am pleased to represent and in which I have worked all of my adult life, has said that the new Bill mentions threats to Canada's security by foreign-influenced activities. Mr. McMurtry said that that sort of definition could include automobile companies such as Honda and Toyota that compete with domestic firms. Perhaps he may be going a little far in drawing that kind of an analogy but I think the point that he is making is that the Bill is so badly drafted and its provisions so inadequate as to make it virtually impossible for any reasonable person, faced with having to deal with the Bill and the agency itself, to determine themselves or through those representing them when and how one is seen to be in violation of the protection of Canada.

Although I personally cannot verify it as being entirely accurate but can only assume that it may well be accurate since it has not been refuted by anyone; it has been reported that Members of Parliament from Quebec are not entirely happy with this piece of legislation and that those from the Province of Quebec are really quite concerned about the whole idea of the federal spy agency.

Mr. Cosgrove: Is that Mr. Mulroney?

Mr. Deans: The Hon. Member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Cosgrove) asks if I am referring to Mr. Mulroney.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order.

Mr. Deans: I assume he is referring to the Leader of the Official Opposition. The truth of the matter is that no one knows if he feels that way or not since he says so little about anything. It may well be that he feels that way, but the fact of the matter is that Members of Parliament from Quebec are reported to be very concerned about the existence of this agency in the form in which it has been presented by the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan).

One need not be of any great age to remember the actions taken by the Liberal Government in the Province of Quebec which were subsequently proven to have been totally unnecessary and extremely harmful. I can well understand that, on the one hand, the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario says that the Bill is inadequate in its draftsmanship and that, on the other hand, Members of Parliament from the Province of Quebec are saying that the Bill is undesirable in its present form. I can understand that because they too must be able to read, as I am able to read, the comments made by the Solicitor General and by his officials.

The Solicitor General and his officials have said, and again I am quite sure that this is correct, that the special review committee of three to five Privy Councillors, mostly retired Cabinet Ministers, will be able to report any attempted cover-ups to Parliament. However, government officials admit that the committee, bound by a secrecy oath, would only be able to

report to Parliament in the vaguest of terms and would certainly not be able to name anyone. What kind of oversight is that? What kind of protection is that? How does the Parliament of Canada respond to the demands of the people of the country? We who are duly elected should at least have some access, if not total access, to information of this type in order to know about the actions of the agency.

The Minister may say that albeit the agency is given power to break the law, that power is to break the law in minimal ways. Incidentally, the Minister has said that and no doubt believes it is true because I know that he is an honourable man. However, he then goes on to say at another time that security agents could enter the offices of doctors and MPs. One must question if that is a minimal breaking of the law. Is that a suitable kind of action that could be condoned by a duly elected and responsible Parliament? Is it reasonable to give members of the security agency the kind of *carte blanche* that would allow them to enter a doctor's office and rummage through the records and take for their own use those records which they feel would be of help to them in the pursuit of their responsibilities?

Does not that situation open up the whole question of the confidentiality of such records and the protection of individual's rights? Does it not come into conflict with everything that we in Canada have stood for with regard to the right of individuals to maintain the degree of confidentiality necessary to protect themselves from undue or unnecessary harassment?

It seems to me that the legislation, as the Attorney General of Ontario has said, as my colleague from Burnaby (Mr. Robinson) has said and as many of my other colleagues have said, is an inadequate piece of work. It is inadequate because it does not do what is necessary to protect the innocent public from over-zealous or perhaps downright intentional intrusion into their lives.

● (1500)

As I started I end, Mr. Speaker: through our Leader this Party has argued for a civilian security service. We cannot accept a security service established by legislation that does not contain protective mechanisms to guarantee a stop to the kinds of abuses that have been identified as possible by groups ranging all the way from civil liberties associations to attorneys general. For that reason, and that reason alone, Mr. Speaker, we cannot expedite passage of the Bill, nor can we allow the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) to continue with it in its present form.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for recognizing me so that I can say a very few words on Bill C-9, an Act to establish the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. I must inform the House that this legislation has bothered me for some weeks. I am apprehensive about it; I do not fully understand it; I do not fully understand the need for it; I do not fully understand its purpose, its structure, its powers or its democratic concepts. As a result, I am concerned that the debate, particularly on the principles of the Bill, should be terminated without what I consider to be an