

ity to wiretap if he knows it can be done illegally and can be introduced in a trial for the purpose of producing a conviction?

My party is opposed to the wiretapping aspects of this legislation. The hon. member for Calgary North has put on the record how cosmetic wiretapping is. Out of 1,062 attempts, evidence which assisted in finding a person guilty of a specific crime was only secured on 13 occasions. When one considers that, he realizes just how little value wiretapping has in the first place. When you think of the encroachment on individual rights and liberties associated with this legislation in its present form, one can well understand why members of parliament have stood up and indicated their concern relating to those sections of this particular piece of legislation which are associated with wiretapping.

Apparently the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) has found time to go on television and tell the Canadian public that we should have an election. One has to remember that he is the man who is in charge of the police forces in this country. He sits as a member of a majority government which has been in office for only three years. Yet, he says the government cannot run the country, that the government cannot get legislation through the House of Commons. All I can say is that if the Solicitor General admits to the Canadian people that the Liberals cannot run the country with a majority government, then how many members do they need on the government side before they can run the country as efficiently as the Solicitor General would like?

● (1740)

The Solicitor General cannot run his own department. He cannot produce legislation associated with a report on penitentiaries produced by a sub-committee which was agreed on unanimously and which detailed how badly penitentiaries were being operated at the present time. Apparently the Solicitor General cannot control the RCM Police and has to have a special inquiry into their operations. Yet this same member goes on television and tells the people the government cannot run the country, after three years of majority government.

We have been saying that the Liberals cannot run the country for quite some time. I am very pleased that the Solicitor General has taken time out of his busy schedule, and away from all the inquiries revolving around him, to tell the Canadian public that the government of today cannot operate in a parliament where it has the majority of the seats. Apparently he is hoping by some magical formula that the Canadian people are going to eliminate the opposition altogether. I imagine that is the only way he feels the government can function properly. But the Canadian people are not going to provide the government with the power to eliminate opposition so that the government can operate by edict.

I feel very badly about the fact that a majority is giving the government the power it now has in Bill C-51. To a far greater degree than in the past the government is going to regulate the lives of Canadians by interfering more and more with their rights. A general election will solve nothing. The government already has a majority mandate from the Canadian people,

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and rather than running around, getting on television, and saying we should have a general election, hon. members opposite should go back to their offices and get their work done. If they did the people of this country would have some confidence in the way hon. members opposite operate the government.

I see the Minister of Justice in his seat. I ask him once again as a House of Commons man to eliminate once and for all any smear that he might have inadvertently left on the reputations of the hon. members for Red Deer, Palliser, Moose Jaw, Kootenay West, and Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) resulting from the injudicious remarks he made outside the House about the contributions of those members in the House. I think it is terribly unfair that a member of this House says outside the House anything about what another member said in the Chamber. As conscientious members of parliament they were speaking in a debate in the House and endeavouring to indicate what were their concerns about a piece of legislation that is troubling a great many Canadians both inside and outside this Chamber. I hope that when I sit down the minister will be willing to do what I suggest. His remarks were something injected into this debate which was not required and added nothing. All members of this party were terribly upset at his injudicious comments, and we hope that the minister will clear the record once and for all.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately time is moving on and for that reason I feel reluctant to say what I would normally say in a third reading speech. I think this legislation is very bad. That is pretty well the opinion of the chiefs of police as well; they indicated they were very sad that the minister has not done for them what they wanted him to do. They referred to the fact that the Carter administration in the United States is in favour of electronic surveillance and that the minister should do what they want. I presume that that means to allow unlimited surveillance. This is probably what the police will carry on anyway. They have never been too law-abiding in their enforcement of the law on others.

I am wondering whether they are really saying that they believe that the Carter administration in the United States is going to allow the police to use all kinds of wiretapping equipment without the benefit of court protection and then allow the use of that illegally obtained evidence to be used in court. I would doubt very much, knowing the reputations of the United States courts, that they would allow illegally obtained wiretap evidence to be used in them.

I suppose it is like people eavesdropping on everybody else. With the old party line telephones, if there was nothing else to do the housewife could always take the receiver off the hook and entertain herself while doing the ironing, the darning, the cooking or whatever. That was a great way to understand what everybody else was doing, and there were no secrets. It was a very open form of communication and whoever wanted to listen could, and often did so. I think it would have been a very brave rural resident who would go to church on Sunday morning and say "Did you hear the gossip on the telephone the