

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada to respond to the statement made by the minister.

Before I begin my substantive remarks, I want to take a moment to thank the minister personally for his courtesy in providing a copy of the report and a copy of his proposed remarks well in advance of 10.10 a.m. today so that I would have an opportunity to review them.

This is something that is much appreciated by myself, and it is something that is of course difficult for the minister because he must expect that I am going to be criticizing the remarks that he made on the report. He is not going to be disappointed. However having said that, I do appreciate the courtesy extended by the minister.

The minister began his remarks by saying that in 1991 he announced that he would make an annual statement to Parliament on national security. Today is an historic day in Canadian history because this is the first statement of its kind ever delivered to the House of Commons.

We have to ask ourselves, is this just something that the minister thought up on his own or was there something more behind it? Of course there was something more behind it, and I think it is important that Canadians know exactly what it is that, if I may put it this way, prompted the minister to bring in his report.

A special committee was struck by the House of Commons on June 27, 1990 and its mandate was to undertake a comprehensive review of the provisions and operations of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and report back to the House. It was a very comprehensive report entitled "In Flux but not in Crisis".

I want to pay specific tribute to the members of that committee, particularly the chairman, the hon. member for Lethbridge and two members from my party, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River and the hon. member for Moncton. They worked very hard to come up with many, many recommendations. The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River, my colleague, is also at the present time the vice-chairman of the subcommit-

tee on national security and takes a particular interest in these issues.

This document produced 117 recommendations. For all intents and purposes, only one of those 117 recommendations was accepted in whole by the Solicitor General. That was number 47 which reads: "The committee recommends that the Solicitor General require the director of CSIS to provide the minister with an additional annual report that can be tabled in Parliament".

In the ministry response to those recommendations, entitled "On Course", the minister had the following to say. It is on the basis of the minister's own words that I will be commenting on the statement today: "The government agrees with the special committee that the annual release of a report on security intelligence matters which could be tabled in Parliament could contribute significantly to informed public debate.

Therefore at the time of tabling the main estimates, the Solicitor General will provide Parliament, beginning in 1992, with an annual statement on the national security issues that face our country. This statement will discuss the major national security issues that were dealt with during the previous year and highlight directions for the year ahead. The minister's statement will be accompanied by a public annual report from the director which will include a discussion of the threat environment."

It is on that basis I propose to examine both the report and the minister's statement today.

After listening to the minister, my first reaction was to remember that commercial of a few years ago where the lady is looking into the camera and shouts, "Where is the beef?" That is exactly the problem. There are many generalities but no specifics. Where is the beef in this statement and indeed in the report?

The minister said we must take precautions against current and potential threats. What threats? What precautions? They are not mentioned. He reminds us that Canadians can be reassured that public safety will remain the government's highest priority. Is public safety threatened? If not, is public safety likely to be threatened in the foreseeable future? If so, why? No answers.