

Government Orders

imprisoned up to two years or fined \$25,000 who use or disclose a radio-based telephone communication or who use or disclose the mere existence of such a communication. Although we are not encouraging the interception of cellular calls, we have great difficulty on this side of the House with creating an offence that could jail people unnecessarily.

• (1635)

As I have said before, as my colleague from Mount Royal has said before, as my colleague for Scarborough—Rouge River, my colleague Cape Breton—The Sydneys, my colleague for Broadview—Greenwood and on and on and on, my colleague from Hamilton I am sure will be adding his voice to this when he speaks later in the debate, ban the scanners. Do the sensible thing. Do the simple thing. Do the least costly thing. Do the least intrusive thing.

It is absolutely amazing that the government, which is constantly saying there is too much government, adds another layer of amazing criminal law in an area that could be handled by technological amendments. It is bizarre.

We support the banning of scanners, but at the same time we do not want to fill our jails with people who intercept cellular telephone calls. In the grand scheme of things this certainly may be a manner of breaking the law. It is a form of an offence, but a jailable offence? There are other things in this country with which we should be more concerned. There are other things we should be thinking of putting people in jail for rather than intercepting cellular phones.

I have said it before and I will say it again. Anyone who uses a cellular phone without knowing that half the world could be listening probably should not be allowed to have that kind of technology at his or her disposal. Everyone from politicians in British Columbia to the Prince of Wales have had bad experiences with the interception of cellular phone calls.

When I spoke at second reading on this matter I mentioned the somewhat unhappy experience that the Liberal Party in Nova Scotia had last year during its leadership convention when a senior executive with the telephone company, and who should have known better the ways and means of intercepting cellular phones than a senior executive of the telephone company, actually

phoned into the computer centre to find out what the tallies were in our non-existent vote. That was overheard by some young computer expert in Halifax who then sold the tape to the CBC, who then with great glee published the tape.

I can assure you it was not a stellar day for the Liberal Party in Nova Scotia for a variety of reasons. However as most of us were saying at that leadership convention, we all knew this could happen. Most of us in this Chamber have cellular phones in our cars or in our brief cases. Is there any one of us who is not aware of the possibility of interception?

I have said before and I will say again that I have had an experience where I have been speaking to colleagues over the cellular phone and I have had to go home and phone from my own telephone to find out what it was we were talking about because we have become so oblique on cellular phones just to make sure that we will not say something we would not want to read in a daily newspaper or hear on television. We have all had that experience, every one of us.

The idea that Canadians have to be in some measure protected because they do not understand the technology and protected by the Criminal Code of Canada, I am afraid I just find it ludicrous.

I can hear a phone ringing right now, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very interesting. It is obviously an omen. It may be for the Minister of Labour. Does he think so? No, he is shaking his head. It is not for him. The Minister of Labour is far too knowledgeable about technology to depend upon cellular phones.

• (1640)

We support the banning of scanners but at the same time we do not want to fill our jails with people who commit these offences. There has to be a more tangible and more sensible means of monitoring scanners and monitoring and controlling the use of these transmissions. I believe, and the Liberal Party believes, that the technological approach is obviously the best.

We should take steps to inform Canadians. This is really important. I know the Minister of Communications has said this on occasion, but I think it needs to come across more that cellular phones are radios. They are not telephones like the telephones we use in our homes. They are radios. Radio waves are different from