

Rosie Brown or Douglas Brown or Rosie Douglas, or whoever it was. He was probably the person under surveillance and it was incidental that words of the member for Nickel Belt, who is usually quiet and reserved and non-vocal, would accidentally get on that particular tape. But, Mr. Speaker, I, as a member of parliament, frankly do not believe that tape was destroyed. That tape was used, and undoubtedly was translated into a document. That document does not refer to the member for Nickel Belt. That document, Mr. Speaker, refers to an investigation that was going on against someone that we agree was under surveillance. We certainly did not hire the police to make a tape that they were going to destroy because "incidentally" they would get some background noise.

I am surprised at some of the things that have happened recently and at the reluctance of most members to look at the RCMP in relation to the problem of security.

The Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) have said that no members were under surveillance, to the best of their knowledge. I suggest the key words are "to the best of their knowledge", and that their knowledge is not very good.

I sincerely believe that I observed the surveillance of a member of parliament in the Toronto airport by an officer acting under the jurisdiction of the RCMP within the last two weeks. This was not done by myself alone. There were two other members of parliament discussing this openly.

● (1522)

The gentleman who was carrying out the surveillance was well aware of the fact we were discussing him. He was doing one of two things; he was either carrying out surveillance of that hon. member of parliament or, worse still, he was attempting to intimidate that member of parliament. He was not intimidating me. I do not think I was important enough in the circumstances to be kept under surveillance, and the gentleman who was with me, that other member of parliament, was not involved to a degree that surveillance could be justified.

I have been here long enough and have been involved in enough things of various natures that I am sure intimidation would not really be effective. This leads me only to the conclusion that another member of parliament was under surveillance.

Let me suggest that the Solicitor General does not know anything about this for one of two reasons; he does not want to know and has never asked, or the RCMP is not about to tell him anyway.

It is my belief that these things should be in the open and discussed. It is very doubtful if the hon. member for Nickel Belt will be damaged, but a member of parliament could be damaged as a result of the fact he is given this great amount of attention on the national media. Intimidation is a two-edged sword as far as a member of parliament is concerned, particularly having regard to the information he may accept.

Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

The Solicitor General may well suggest this was incidental or accidental and the surveillance no longer exists, but I doubt if that is true. I think it would be very hard to make any kind of case against someone who has been under surveillance for sometime, during which time a tape has been made which has whole sections missing. I doubt if any case could be made with a tape that has blank spots every few minutes. We know what happened in another country regarding a tape with missing sections. I think some questions would be asked again in respect of a tape made during an inquiry which had blanks, or missing sections in a record made from such a tape. I cannot visualize the RCMP carrying on that kind of surveillance over a period of time, bringing a man in from another country, and all the other things that have happened, if they were then all of a sudden going to destroy the tape and the evidence which had been gathered during that period of surveillance.

We have not yet reached the point where we are burying our mistakes in this country. I believe it would be wise to bring them to light and have a look at them. Undoubtedly when we established the security apparatus of this country we really never spelled out what it was supposed to do. I am sure that some types of activity which may be anti-government, and that means anti-Liberal, would appear to be subversive to some officers. I am sure one would not have to go as far as being against a provincial government to be considered by some as being subversive. It may be felt that an individual was subversive if he said something during an angry moment about somebody who was considered the boss.

This matter should be examined, because I believe that after a full examination of this and a number of other matters before Your Honour at the present time we would have a much better system of national security and a much more clear understanding of what members of parliament can do and the protection which exists for them. Lastly, I am sure that we could establish once and for all what are the real responsibilities of the Solicitor General regarding our national police force, what accountability on their behalf he must have to parliament, and how open he should be with this institution.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege, I submit that this involves a question of fact. The whole matter revolves around a statement I sent to the hon. gentleman in letter form, which I am sure he received today. I am just reiterating what I said, that I have conducted a very thorough and full investigation with the RCMP, and I am saying in this House, as I indicated in the letter I submitted to the hon. gentleman, that there has been that very thorough investigation during which I interviewed supervisors in the RCMP relating to this matter. I did so because of my concern about the rights of members of parliament, and I would use my best effort to allay any suspicion that may arise.

As a result of that very thorough investigation, for which I take full responsibility, I can assure the hon. gentleman that his fears ought to be allayed, because there is not, and never has been, any tape of any conversation involving the RCMP in relation to this matter, in any particular. As I indicated to the hon. gentleman, the RCMP—