

*Government Orders*

I highlight all these items because they are an accumulation of the invasion of privacy which more and more is becoming a serious concern. Some of the areas are within provincial jurisdiction, but notwithstanding members of the House are now involved in the gathering of information about ourselves and about citizens out there without their consent and without their knowledge. That kind of invasion of privacy is becoming very worrisome. Personal information is being gathered, assembled and circulated electronically by all sorts of enterprises.

Were you asked and did you give permission, Mr. Speaker? I know I was not asked. Nor did I give permission. We need to look into the matter very seriously. I would suggest these concerns are all part and parcel of legislation and public policies that must be looked at today. We have increased technological access in this information age.

The particular bill addresses the question of cellular privacy, but it is just one example of how the age of technology is making matters of personal information and personal privacy key issues in the nineties. Clearly the communications and information revolution will continue bringing forward new issues into our daily lives that never existed before but which must be dealt with expeditiously before technology essentially runs away with our privacy.

In terms of the cellular telephone and cellular privacy let us take a look at the problem. I addressed it fairly extensively on April 26 when at report stage the government refused to accept a number of the amendments I brought forward. I thought they were enlightened amendments, not because I thought them up but because they came from an experience the Americans had with which I will deal in a moment.

I was trying to point out, and I point it out again, that Canadians have traditionally looked at their telephone as a safe, confidential, no snooping, no drop-in, no eavesdropping kind of exchange ability with a neighbour, with a friend, with the family, with their doctor, with their lawyer and with their stockbroker. They have felt a sense of comfort that no one has been listening in and no one can steal their information.

They could go about deciding how they were going to react to certain information in the stock-market or in the bond-market. They could talk about their financial

obligations, what they were going to be purchasing, et cetera, over the normal system. There was a sense of confidence this would remain private within the confines of the two-telephone system they were using.

However cellular telephones are quite different. They are really radio phones as I tried to point out the other day. They pass calls along a whole series of cells out there along the highways and byways of our country called the public domain. It is in the area of the public airwaves. They are not private.

• (1540)

The key difference is that the public generally does not recognize that every cellular phone user is basically using a radio. We even see people in restaurants walking around with their cellular telephones. I personally happen to find that totally abhorrent. If they want to have private conversations or need to talk to someone, let them go and use the telephone or let them go outside. I find it kind of rude in the middle of a conversation in a restaurant around a table. However, I suppose maybe that is a macho new look with a new toy but it is not macho. Whatever it is, it is poor manners in my view.

They are making radio calls on these little devices and it is as if they were shrieking inside that restaurant. Instead, they are shrieking outside on the general airwaves. Their conversations can be picked up by anyone who cares to eavesdrop.

I guess it is the old adage of buyer beware in this new age of information. The other day I said perhaps people who sell cellular phones should have people sign a paper which says: "I am aware of the fact that this is not a traditional telephone. This is a radio phone and I am aware of the fact that I can be easily overheard, that there is no confidentiality that is concomitant with the use of this telephone. I therefore acknowledge that this is free and open air". Maybe if we get people to sign this kind of statement when they buy their telephones they might be a little bit more sensitive to the problems that can crop up.

I do not think we can expect that in the fulsomeness of the measures we need to meet the goals of this particular bill. The goals of this bill are to stop interference and protect the privacy that people have become used to on their wired phones at home or in the office.