

*Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez*

The government has established in the McDonald Commission a mechanism whereby certain actions of our federal police force may be examined, but I believe in this case that is not the mechanism that should be used. In this case we are not discussing general policies or actions but rather the possibility of a specific breach of the privileges of a member of this House. As such I believe that breach must be examined and dealt with by members of this House.

Only by taking such an action will it be possible to ascertain clearly what has taken place, and what has not taken place. The question of whether or not I was the subject of electronic surveillance, whether officially sanctioned or not, must be clearly answered. If the action did not take place, then the sworn statement of Mr. Hart must be discredited by investigation so as to reassure my constituents.

If the surveillance did take place, then the circumstances surrounding that surveillance must be investigated and reported on in a public manner. I believe the only body which can and should undertake such an investigation is the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of this House. I, therefore, move, Mr. Speaker:

That this matter of privilege concerning possible electronic surveillance against myself, the sworn statement of Mr. Warren Hart and the statements of the Solicitor General be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, and that that body be requested to undertake to bring before it any persons having or claiming knowledge of this affair, so that the whole truth may be discovered and publicized in such a way as to restore the confidence of my constituents in the confidentiality of our communications and thus end the breach of privilege which exists.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a brief contribution, and I should say at the outset, sir, that it is in support of the motion that has just been moved now by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez).

It seems to me, sir, that we have facing us in this House, particularly during the time the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) has held his portfolio, some rather curious events and circumstances with respect to his answers relating to matters within his jurisdiction. The reason I support the motion now placed by the hon. member for Nickel Belt in one aspect is that this is another example of a situation in which we receive in this House, or have received, a categorical denial with respect to activities of the security service or of people who have been engaged by the security service with respect to the members of parliament.

I should point out that it is not from the point of view of the interests of the members of parliament that this motion should in fact be accepted and supported by all members of the House but, rather, on behalf of those people whom we represent because, sir, the fact of the matter is that the point of confidentiality does not lie in the interests of the member of parliament. We derive, sir, no particular benefit from that confidentiality. It is the constituent, the person who has the grievance, the complainant in many instances, who wants, requires, and, indeed, should have this particular confidential-

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

ity in dealing with a member of parliament in the highest court of the land, as is parliament.

The reason that I am quite concerned about the answer that has been given by the Solicitor General, and the apparent contradictions which now appear in the national press, on television, and in other ways, is that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) received from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) a categorical assurance by letter that there was absolutely no instance of any member of parliament being under surveillance by the security services or any other police force under the federal jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not qualify that by saying that this was incidental—that the person was under surveillance incidentally or indirectly. He made the categorical statement in that letter and assured the Leader of the Opposition. The fact of the matter is that, out of the mouth of the Solicitor General himself, now comes an exception, an exception to this particular proposition that was put forward by the Prime Minister.

I say to you, sir, that if this is in fact the kind of answer we receive, it not only speaks badly of the Solicitor General but I want to say, sir, that it speaks absolute volumes about the Prime Minister and the way in which he cavalierly gives assurances to officers of this House.

So, sir, I simply want to say to you that as far as I am concerned I support very strongly the position that this particular motion is an ideal situation by which a direct conflict is documentable in that the Solicitor General has said one thing in the House, and said another thing quite the opposite, outside the House. It should be referred to the committee on that basis alone, but, more important, the whole question of the rights and privileges of a member of parliament to receive representation and information from constituents from the people of this country on a confidential basis, should be examined thoroughly by this committee, using this particular instance as the focal point for its examination.

Sir, I therefore wish to support very strongly the motion put forward and assure the hon. member of my support in this particular endeavour.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge the House to accept this motion and send it to the committee, and I do so, Mr. Speaker, because of the sleazy way the government has of answering charges that are made in the manner that this one has been made.

The hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) points out that the minister changed his wording from “accidental” to “incidental”, and that that should make a difference. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that it certainly makes a difference, and that probably the wording was not loosely used but was correctly used.

My knowledge of the former solicitor general is not good enough for me to be able to say what the intention was, but I am sure in the case of the hon. member for Nickel Belt, it was incidental to the taping that Hart was doing in relation to