

Security Intelligence Service

—but does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d).

Not very many things fall under the exemption category whereas a great many things constitute a threat to our security.

This ill-defined clause has been kept in the Bill despite cries of protest from civil liberties organizations, church organizations and many others. Hearings have been held on this matter and there have been protests. My own Party has protested this clause most vigorously, strenuously and in great detail. The net has been cast too broadly.

Foreign-influenced activities within or relating to Canada could be activities which have nothing to do with terrorism, espionage or anything else that constitutes a serious threat to the security of the country. When dealing with the reference to political violence, the McDonald Commission recommended that the word "serious" be added. Even that word was not included. We are therefore faced with a definition section that is quite dangerous to those engaging in lawful political discussion.

I would like to refer to some critical remarks that have been made by the Canadian Council of Churches on this matter. I think these remarks are very good both in their philosophical approach and in their very precise analysis of particular clauses. The Canadian Council of Churches represents an enormous cross-section of the religious community within Canada. Member churches include the Anglican Church in Canada, the Armenian Church, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Disciples of Christ, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church in America—Canada Section, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Reformed Church in America, the Society of Friends, the Salvation Army and the United Church of Canada. These churches collaborated to come up with what, in my opinion, is an excellent critique of the Bill.

The philosophical point raised by members of the Canadian Council of Churches which I think is well worth considering in our debate today is the difficulty of attaining security, and the very fundamental questions that arise and must be asked. What or whom is the Government seeking to secure against what kind of threat and by what means? There are simply no easy answers to these questions.

Members of the council warn against very heavy handed measures which are intended to secure the lives and communities of Canada but which may not do so. They call the definition of "threats to the security of Canada" vague and uncertain and hence excessively broad in effect. They are particularly concerned about the broad interpretations of paragraphs (b) and (c) of Clause 2 to which I have already referred. I shall read that concern from the report:

Our submission is that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service could construe lawful church activities, for example in mission work and/or lawful church and community activities, including development education, peace advocacy and human rights defence as falling within these definitions, and hence to determine previously lawful activities as threats to the security of Canada.

This is an extremely serious charge which has been made by the mainstream Christian churches of our society. They say that according to these loose and woolly definitions, their own peace activities and missionary efforts could be construed as being threats to the security of Canada. Let me explain how this is so.

With regard to Clause 2, paragraphs (a) and (b), they are concerned about the vague phrase "the interests of Canada". What are the legitimate interests of Canada and who defines what they are? Can we distinguish the interests of Canada from the interests of Canadian citizens? Could there be a legitimate conflict among the citizens of Canada as to what Canada's interests are? They cite, for example a visiting foreign finance minister from a country in which churches have carried on mission work for many years. Suppose the finance minister requested a private meeting with church officials and that meeting took place. Because the meeting was private, it would then be considered clandestine and perhaps deceptive. He may wish to decrease his country's dependence on Canadian exports, but increase Canadian foreign aid—a very laudable objective in our opinion, but certainly not one which the Canadian Government would promote.

• (1810)

The visiting foreign minister might enlist the assistance of Canadian friends in the churches in Canada. Therefore, the meeting could be construed as foreign influence because he comes from a foreign country. It may be detrimental to the interests of Canada if the interests of Canada are seen in a very narrow, economic fashion. It may be in the interests of Canada to exploit all foreign countries to the hilt. That is a horrendous but, nevertheless, very possible definition of the interests of Canada. The meeting might be classified as deceptive if it had not been clearly specified precisely what the meeting was about. If the meeting was given a loose definition to the press, or to other people, that it was to be about missionary work, it could then be included in the clandestine and deceptive category.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but I must advise her that her time has expired.

Ms. McDonald: Mr. Speaker, could I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to finish my remarks.

Mr. Kaplan: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member seeks the unanimous consent of the House to continue her speech. Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, one of her colleagues made exactly that same speech less than one hour ago. Therefore I withhold my consent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There is not unanimous consent. The Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong).