

*Government Orders*

We are saying you cannot listen in on cellular phone conversations, use the information that you hear in those conversations, transpose it or relay it to somebody else who can use the information but we should not ban the scanners.

I do not agree. Please do not get me wrong. I do not condone eavesdropping, I do not condone the infringement of privacy. I do not condone the malicious utilization of private information for public or private gain, but I do think we have to move in the right direction. If we do not, then we are not correcting the problem, we are misleading the public. I think that would be a very sad thing to do and certainly something I do not think the government is intending.

Once again I would like to look at what the minister said. As reported at page 16492 of *Hansard*:

The second amendment included in Bill C-109 is close to my own heart and deals with the issue of cellular radios and personal privacy. Not long ago *The Financial Post* conducted an experiment listening to cellular conversations on an easily obtainable inexpensive scanner. In a brief period of time the *Post* intercepted calls made by stockbrokers, real estate agents, federal bureaucrats, police and others. The subjects varied from the mundane to the illegal, everything from what to serve for dinner to where to conduct a drug transaction.

He goes on to say in another situation:

During one two-hour session *The Edmonton Journal* heard one caller give his credit number over cellular, one woman give her address to a date, several intimate conversations and numerous business telephone calls. Another caller mentioned by name a man recently diagnosed with terminal cancer. It is possible the *Journal* reporter knew about this before his next of kin.

Then he goes on to say that privacy is disappearing and Canadians are worried about it. There is no question that privacy is disappearing. I want to know whether the provisions regarding cellular phones are going to change that.

• (1430)

I do not know how many newspapers the minister has contacted about their listening in on cellular phone conversations. I do not know if there has been a program to determine this or what. I, frankly, do not appreciate the government cavalierly discussing this with newspapers as if this is some kind of survey. I think it is much more serious than that.

Whether you make it illegal or not, there is nothing in this section that is going to stop the abuse. Sure, you can say to someone that they cannot listen to another person's phone conversation, that they cannot benefit from it, that they cannot pass it on to somebody else, but how in heaven's name are you going to prove it? If something is picked up on a cellular phone conversation and used, chances are you are never going to know that it was picked up and, if you do know, you are never going to know by whom. Chances are that the person who picks it up is not going to tell everybody that they have done it. The ones who will be punished are the ones who somehow are known through their conversations with other people that this has happened.

The problem is that it is not addressing the abuse. There are many ways to get away from it. It will be done day after day after day. Those who do it, maybe for a reason much more bona fide than most, may be caught and charged.

What we want here, surely to heavens, is to give Canadians the sense that their privacy is not being invaded and that this abuse is going to be corrected. It is not going to be corrected by giving them the false sense of security that their cellular phone conversations are going to be secure because they are not going to be secure, not by a long shot.

Most people in Canada are not technically sophisticated on the operation of a cellular phone. They do not realize that every phone call they make can be picked up by scanners, of which there are 900,000 in Canada. A lot of people are just interested in what other people say.

The reason we got away from the party line was because we did not want people listening in on our conversations. You did not know if your neighbour was telling people what he or she heard, but you knew that he or she did hear your conversations. It was an invasion of privacy. This is going to be much worse than a party line because everybody is going to be your neighbour, everybody, and you are not going to know it. Moreover, with the party line you could at least hear clicking at the other end so that you knew somebody was on the line. I know how to do it, yes. I have been on a party line, I have got this down pat. The point is that you at least had a little tip-off. But here there is no tip-off.