

knew that doing so would add somewhat to the difficulties of law enforcement officers. But we should respect the fact that most of these officers are upholders of the tradition of Canadian law and will do their best in every way to enforce the law.

I think it is wrong for individual members of the House or for members of the public to generalize on the basis of a single incident, or a few incidents, and go on to question the police forces as a whole. What we want to do here is to make the work of the police in enforcing the law more effective by allowing, in very carefully controlled circumstances, the use of wiretapping and electronic devices. I think it is vital, therefore, that we oppose the amendment put forward by the hon. member for New Westminster and make it possible, with all the careful controls which have been inserted in the bill, for the police to use electronic equipment in their enforcement work when it is really necessary for them to fall back on such a choice.

● (2150)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Guay (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, just like several members of this House, and particularly Liberal members, I agree with the minister and I am opposed to these proposed amendments.

An overall review of this bill reveals that it stems from the duty the state has to protect its secrets, its information, its institutions and its policy against spying, indiscretion, subversion and illegal intrusion. On the other hand, we can dispute the efficiency of the organization and structures established by the state to fulfill its responsibilities in an area where fundamental liberties of the individual can be at stake.

In all countries, security practices include a set of measures. There is a series of measures on the classification, care, handling and transmission of documents and materials to be protected. Some technical devices come into play and here some concern was expressed on the infringement of the state and of the individuals and organizations on what we agree to call the right to privacy. The problem is vast and includes for instance the wiretapping of telephone conversations and the use of wiretapping devices, cameras with telephoto lenses as well as some other very sophisticated equipment used by the police and other organizations to detect offences or get information.

One question seems to raise some concern: It is the use of certain technical investigation procedures to collect information. Of course, the security measures involving personnel for instance, are the basis of any efficient security system. However, normal legal procedures may sometimes lead to injustice and the same thing applies to security procedures. This is why whatever arrangements are made to protect the rights of the individual his most important right, which is the right to fair treatment, finally depends on the existence of a policy.

Through this bill we want to define this policy. This is the question I ask hon. members tonight: Should we once and for all define a policy on wiretapping? Many people seem to hesitate and yet a fair amount of time has been used by a number of hon. members since the beginning of this debate to suggest that this practice is being enormously abused. Thousands of electronic wiretapping cases are

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mentioned but if you consider the statistics you wonder where is the abuser. They say that thousands of people will be spied upon to find only maybe one criminal. The statistics supplied by the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) for 1971-72 show that about 663 wiretappings have occurred.

I wonder why this debate is allowed to drag on since it seems that each member has at heart the protection of privacy and also the country's security requirements. If I had to give another title to the bill I would call it: Protection of privacy and security requirements in Canada. This is what the bill is all about. Through this bill we have attempted to create offences as regards the use, interruption and monitoring of private conversations as well as possession and sale of wiretapping devices.

Even though we may disagree, I think that the general feeling in the House is that enough has been said. For the third time within three years we are dealing with this bill. We had another chance to do that in March 1970 and in June 1971, and for eight or nine months we have been considering this bill in the House. Many members participated in the debate. We have moved amendments in the Standing Committee of Justice and Legal Affairs.

As a Canadian representing voters in the province of Quebec, I ask once and for all that we put an end to this debate and say: Yes, what we want is to protect the individual. We also want order within our country. A moment ago, I heard some members say that it was immoral to provide the tools that police officers need to fight against organized crime and drug traffic.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have better evidence, for then it is also immoral for a police officer to carry a handgun to kill an individual. It is immoral to kill someone with a handgun. I say that we must give policemen the necessary tools to carry out the fight against crime.

That is what people expect from us. It is time that we reassured them, that we endured order in this country and I do not see why all hon. members could not agree unanimously on that. Perhaps the law will not be perfect but at least it will be a start, a step toward the instauration of order and security for the government and every individual in this country.

We want this great country to be beautiful but yet we must consider that people today are looking at us and saying: What are you waiting for to act? It is urgent. We see the abuses indulged in at present in the province of Quebec, especially in Montreal, as well as in many other places.

We want to regulate all those things, we want through most effective legislation to protect the public, and that is the purpose of our mandate to sit in this House. That is what is expected of us today and I, for one, make it a duty in conscience. We should act as responsible men in this House and make decisions rather than mere speeches.