

*Adjournment Debate*

In that regard you would be aware, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that there is a study that has the approval of all the provinces that is ongoing at the present time. They are looking at trying to develop a consensus, first among themselves, as to what the problems are, and then how best we can attack those problems.

I am sure the Hon. Member would be interested to know that this will be something that will be discussed at the upcoming meeting the federal Minister of Justice is to have with his provincial counterparts. It is a reasonable approach.

While the Hon. Member may be impatient for change, and he has very legitimate concerns, I believe he should wait at least for the outcome of this meeting. As I say, the Minister has said publicly that we are taking a very close look at this matter and will proceed expeditiously with it.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

• (1800)

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

### REVENUE CANADA—USE OF SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBERS

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal):** Mr. Speaker, back in 1964, there was a system adopted by the Government of the day to identify pension and unemployment insurance claimants called the social insurance number system. From 1964 to 1967, social insurance numbers were used exclusively for those two purposes. In 1967, the Government decided that it would be expanded to be included as an identifier on income tax returns.

Since 1967, up until 1988, it was included for a whole host of reasons. It was used as an identifier for people who were making applications for fishing licences, for people who were applying for financial assistance, for people who were travelling abroad and a whole host of other things. It got to the point where it was out of control. Indeed, it was of such a concern that the

Government decided last June it was going to do something about it. I will refer to that in a moment.

In my opinion, this should be of deep concern to anybody who has any concern for their personal privacy. In June, 1988, it was determined by the federal Government that it would be utilized for the identification of certain financial information with reference to the purchase of securities, T-Bills, stocks and bonds, stocks traded in minerals and precious metals and things of that nature.

At that time, it was also determined that the Government was going to move to eliminate the use of social insurance numbers in a host of other areas. I would just like to quote from a press release that came out from the Treasury Board of Canada on June 8. The Treasury Board President of the day, Pat Carney said: "Many Canadians feel threatened by the use of social insurance numbers as a universal identifier. With the rapid development of computer technology there is a growing concern that the SIN may be misused for linking personal information in ways that may pose a threat to personal individual privacy."

This is exactly the point that I was attempting to make with the Minister. I do not believe that the Government moved far enough when it took the initiative to eliminate the utilization of social insurance numbers for a whole lot of different things, some of which I have just previously referred to.

The difficulty, as I see it, is that it is not necessary for the Government to utilize social insurance numbers when individuals are making applications primarily through private concerns by a paper. The reason I say that is because Revenue Canada has alternate methods. As a matter of fact, it has primary methods, that it can identify the billions of dollars that are earned from investment income in this country. It is just now utilized by the Government as a back-up to systems that it already has in place.

The distressing part about it is that now people are going to be fined by the Government. At least, that provision is in place, that people can be faced with a \$100 fine if they do not provide that information.

The interesting aspect of this is that senior citizens who now feel that they should have a secure place in our society are primarily those individuals who are expressing concern about the utilization of their social insurance number by a criminal element or unscrupulous individual. There is the potential in this computer-related society and technologically advanced world in which we live for people to gain access to information that they might not otherwise have access to, particularly in the