

Mr. Nystrom: My main concern is whether by the creation of this new security service we are giving it a mandate that is too sweeping in terms of civil rights, freedoms and liberties. As I said before, I think it is a very delicate balance that we have to strike. From what I have read and from the contacts I have had with ordinary citizens, I feel that what is happening here is that the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) is giving too much power to this security service.

As I look around the House I still see a few Members who were here in October, 1970 when we had the October crisis. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was here, I was here, and the Minister of State for External Relations (Mr. Pepin) was here as well. My mind goes back some 13 and a half years to what happened in October, 1970. There have been some well documented facts that the RCMP and the public authorities went overboard in responding to the FLQ crisis in the Province of Quebec. Just look at the number of people who were arrested, people who were innocent and had absolutely nothing to do with subversion in this country or anything to do with violence. They were picked up and thrown in jail. Their rights were stripped away from them by the invocation of the War Measures Act at that time.

I was one of the 16 Members of Parliament, along with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre, who stood up in this House and said no, that the Government should not invoke the War Measures Act. I think we were right. I think history has proved us right. I remember seeing an interview given by Robert Stanfield, who was the then Leader of the Opposition. He said that one of his major mistakes in public life was to support the invocation of the War Measures Act. I know at the time he was very bothered and caught up in the public fear and paranoia resulting from what we were being fed by the media and by the Government across the way. He said that was perhaps the most serious mistake he had made in public life. I have immense respect for Robert Stanfield, for his judgment and for his humanitarian feelings. I think what he was saying to us is that often in society we can get carried away if we give too much power to law enforcers or to a special force.

● (1430)

Having gone through that experience once, albeit in extraordinary circumstances or in extraordinary times, I do not want to take the risk as a person representing 70,000 Saskatchewan people of giving a too sweeping mandate or too sweeping scope of powers to a new security service. I cast my mind back to the days leading up to the McDonald Commission and its inquiry into the wrongdoings of the RCMP, to the barn burning by RCMP officers in the Province of Quebec and to other things which occurred at that particular time. Those kinds of issues which some of us in the House have experienced as parliamentarians make us extremely wary of giving a sweeping mandate to any security service.

I say this for a number of reasons, one of which is that we do not have proper parliamentary scrutiny or accountability for what we will create in the Bill before the House today.

Security Intelligence Service

When it comes right down to it, the only person who will be responsible for ensuring that there is not an over-zealous application of the powers of the law will be the Solicitor General. That is not adequate in a parliamentary democracy; that is wrong. There should be much greater parliamentary accountability built into this legislation as well as into almost every Bill we pass in the House.

It is important that the security service not be there to stifle legitimate consent in the country. It is important that it not be there to harass legitimate protestations or demonstrations against governments of the day. It is important that it be there to stop illegal and violent activities, not to thwart in any way legitimate dissent in Canada. Without the proper kind of parliamentary scrutiny and accountability—and they are not built into the system at this time—I am afraid that the powers under its mandate are too sweeping and too broad. I say that having seen the October crisis and the many occurrences which led up to the inquiry by the McDonald Commission.

I see Mr. Speaker indicating that my time is up. Perhaps I could continue at a later date.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I have to rise at this point in time to participate in the debate, under the circumstances. I draw the attention of the House to what exactly we are debating. I suggest that it is a motion which was put surreptitiously, in bad faith, by the Deputy Whip of the Liberal Party that the question on second reading be now put.

For those uninitiated in parliamentary procedure, let me describe what this means. Purely and simply it is a motion by an arrogant, unthinking and callous government to impose closure on a debate involving a very serious problem with respect to the security of the country. Simply put, that is what we are faced with by this Government. We have had the opportunity of considering this matter for some three days on the floor of the House of Commons. Granted we have had over eight hours of debate. Also we have had the opportunity of hearing some very interesting points of view. But as was pointed out earlier by my colleagues, we have had no more than three government participants. The purpose of one of those interventions was to move the motion of closure. That is the way in which this Government views this important issue. That is the kind of so-called bona fides with which they approach the issue of a security service in Canada and allow elected Members of the House of Commons an opportunity for full and frank debate about the merits of the legislation. That is an indication of the way in which the Government will deal with what I consider to be fair and reasonable Opposition amendments.

Quite frankly, we can disabuse ourselves of any idea that the Government has any serious intention of listening to the Opposition or to any other interest group, especially on the basis of the way in which it is now operating with respect to the legislation. Government Members say that the Senate has heard representations concerning this legislation. They have said that there have been royal commissions. However, what they are saying to Canadians is that, as far as their elected