

must be enabled to act rather than react to these groups. A step in this direction is the creation of a group in the government structure which will study and report on dissident groups and their intentions as they relate to the safety of Canadians.

I would also like to make the point that the Commissioner and the Director-General of the R.C.M. Police Security Service, who normally report directly to me, also have the right of direct access to the Prime Minister in exceptional circumstances. Another point to be noted is that departments of the government of Canada are themselves responsible for personnel and physical security matters which arise within respective departments.

In short, in view of my responsibilities as Solicitor General for keeping a watching brief on developing threats to Canada's security by virtue of my office and duties relative to the R.C.M. Police, and in view of the increasing amount of information with which I must be familiar—not only on police matters but also on matters pertaining to the Canadian Penitentiary Service and the National Parole Board—there is a need for an adequate advisory staff to assist me. The Security Planning and Research Group will perform this function where matters of internal security are concerned.

In forming this group, I am following a principle which is not inconsistent with what was said in the House of Commons on June 26, 1969 by the hon. Leader of the Opposition when the revised report of the Royal Commission on Security was tabled. Mr. Stanfield said, and I quote:

[English]

I am sure that members of parliament accept the necessity that much of the security operation is conducted outside our purview. What would be cause for grave concern would be any thought that much of the operation is beyond the ken of the ministry or the Prime Minister; that there are not ministers, elective and responsible members of government to whom the entire security operation is an open book, who have continuing access to everything that is going on in that area, and who give proper, responsible, political, civilian direction to the operation on a continuing basis. None of us would want to see a security operation in this country running under its own steam and answerable only to itself—a government, so to speak, within the government. The very decision as to what affects security and what does not, what must be secret and what public, is finally a matter of political decision and judgment. The effective supremacy of the civilian authority must never be compromised in this matter.

Those words are to be found in *Hansard* for June 26, 1969, at page 10639.

[Translation]

I am confident that the Security Planning and Research Group will perform a most useful function for the government and for all Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, we are at long last happy that the minister has broken his and the government's silence in reference to its new security planning and research group. In fact, I think he felt that at long last he could say a few words of his own, and at long last I can say a few words of my own on this subject. The minister said at the outset of the report that he had made this statement at the request of Members of Parliament. May I point out that the expression "request" is indeed a very mild one for we have continually ques-

tioned and interrogated for days the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Solicitor General (Mr. Goyer) and other cabinet ministers in an endeavour to pry out of the government information about what the right hon. Prime Minister of this country describes as a headless group.

What is this group? What is its purpose? Why was the report not made when Parliament first reconvened? The minister speaks about balancing the rights of the state with the liberty of the individual, yet the media, especially the press, were endeavouring to search for information and to pry the facts out of the minister in order to determine what the government had up its sleeve in reference to security.

Why was debate denied when the Prime Minister had promised it? Why is there secrecy about the whole thing?

Mr. Nielsen: There still is.

Mr. Woolliams: There still is, yes. We had hoped that the minister would tell us today about the security policy of this country, about the procedures which will be followed to ensure that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the security group act under the guidance of the minister and the cabinet, so that the minister and the cabinet can effectively discharge their responsibilities as the civilian heads of our security force. But there was not a word as to this, only a bald statement full of references about functions, followed by historical and philosophical remarks.

The government has continued to exhibit this curious reluctance to "come clean" until finally the pressure of public opinion, no doubt, forced the Solicitor General to make the statement he made this afternoon. As a result of this curious reluctance we must weigh, analyse and scrutinize the statement with great care, indeed I say with suspicion.

Speaking of suspicion caused by the minister's reluctance to speak, I recommend and urge that this matter, indeed this report and the minister's statement on the whole question of security, be referred to a special committee made up of members of this House and of the other place. Alternatively, if necessary, and if the minister should so decide, it could be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. In view of the fact that security is a very serious matter and that certain facts must be kept confidential, if necessary portions of the hearing could be held in camera, just as security matters during the war were reviewed and discussed by Members of Parliament of this chamber.

The purpose of having a committee to analyse the report and this statement is to find out from the minister the reason that a new liaison group was set up when all the time a liaison group was in existence, as well as the reason that the personnel of that liaison group and of the privy council and external affairs department have been mysteriously banished from their high, sensitive positions to far away places. We find that there have been more changes, new moves and fresh firings and banishments taking place even over the weekend.

Mr. Nielsen: There may even have been impeachments.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes, there may have been impeachments.