

Security Intelligence Service

● (1130)

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the speech of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) and I have to admit that I agreed with much of what he had to say. It is in the nature of government to be authoritarian.

Mr. Kaplan: He did not say anything about the Bill.

Mr. Friesen: That may be. I still can agree with what he had to say even though he was not talking about the Bill.

Mr. Blaikie: I was talking about the Bill.

Mr. Friesen: Nevertheless, there are a couple of things I would like to point out to the Hon. Member. Toward the end he mentioned the fact that members of the left have historically been subject to intimidation of sorts by members of the right. I think he will understand when I say that I abhor any kind of oppression, whether it be of the right or the left. I think it is wrong. Freedom is the name of the game in our land. We appreciate and thrive on freedom of expression. But he should understand that the right does not have the monopoly on that kind of intimidation.

An example of that is the left-wing of Vancouver City Council. The Council entertained a motion regarding the visit of Mr. Kissinger to Vancouver to the effect that if he were to come to Vancouver, he should not be allowed to speak unless the opposing point of view was presented. Now, that is wrong. It does not matter whether it is the right or the left.

Mr. Blaikie: I agree.

Mr. Friesen: Certainly the right does not enjoy a monopoly on that because I have seen enough left-wing fora where the same kind of oppression, intimidation and shouting down takes place as the Hon. Member ascribes to the right.

Mr. Thacker: And which Party wants more government?

Mr. Friesen: That is right; which Party wants more centralized government and state planning than the Party on the left?

Mr. Sargeant: How about John A. Macdonald?

Mr. Friesen: The second point I would like to make is the Hon. Member's reference to Mr. Woodsworth in the context of the Winnipeg general strike of 1919. I understand where he is coming from on that point. I agree that the paranoia of the day intimidated those who were voicing genuine social concerns about the right of labour unions to demonstrate and speak their mind. It was because of that and knowing the concern the NDP have had historically about that, that I was shocked—and I think that is probably the right word—when I read *Hansard* of last Friday and saw the comments of the Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen). I think the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill would like to take note of what that Hon. Member had to say. I do not want to do injustice to what he said so I will read it verbatim. At first he quoted from a speech he made in an international forum at

the Strasbourg Conference on Parliamentary Democracy last year. He said, as reported at page 2182 of *Hansard*:

It may—indeed—be preferable to recognize that, from time to time, law enforcement agencies may, in pursuance of their mandates, circumvent or go beyond the law. At least if the perpetrators of excesses are caught, they risk being penalized or prosecuted. But it may be preferable to go that route rather than to brutalize the law itself, because if previously criminal or illegal acts are made legal, their common use will undoubtedly be extended and become the norm rather than the exception, and we go on from there until 1984 will indeed be with us.

While electronic surveillance... may be necessary from time to time, especially when so much information and currency is transacted electronically—thus eliminating physical evidence of its use or transmission, it may be preferable to ignore investigative excesses from time to time rather than to codify and legitimize them and thus guarantee their use and encourage excesses that go beyond them.

That is the end of his quotation from his speech at the conference. He went on to say on Friday:

What I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, and it is my own opinion, is that sometimes it is better to lift the telescope to your blind eye. You cannot make a constant practice of it, but as I said at the conference last year, it is preferable to brutalizing the law and encouraging regular use of mechanisms which up until now have been illegal. It is better to have a silent understanding that from time to time you look the other way, if excessive methods are required in terms of some imminent danger, rather than to brutalize and corrupt the whole process of liberty as we have come to know it.

That is an astounding point of view from the Hon. Member from Kootenay West.

Mr. Sargeant: Why?

Mr. Friesen: Why?

Mr. Blaikie: You would rather brutalize the law, would you?

Mr. Friesen: He says if the law enforcement agencies are going to do their work, then you have to allow them some liberties. Mr. Speaker, that is what brought about the McDonald Commission. He is saying in effect that it was all right in past years for the RCMP to do things that normally would be considered wrong. Given certain exigencies he says it is all right. That is why we had the McDonald Commission and why we had this legislation. We may disagree with certain points of this legislation but that is why we have it. I am curious about that point of view. We have the historical references by that Party to the problems it faced with dissent in the general strike of 1919 and the accusations laid to their former leader, Mr. Woodsworth. I understand that, but the question the Hon. Member raises is: Who decides which laws can be broken?

We have some fairly tense moments in British Columbia now between labour and management. If there were a dispute at Kootenay Forest Products or Cominco, regardless of where the tensions come from, is the Hon. Member saying that there are certain kinds of surveillance of either Party which are going to be okay? What do we do about the protection of our civil rights if the Hon. Member can convince his Party that that is all right? The Hon. Member does not want these laws codified. He is saying that the behaviour should remain in as gray an area as possible so that the intelligence agency has as much latitude as possible to interpret the law as it pleases?