

apparently directed solely to a certain group who happen to be political candidates. Your Honour is not asked to deal with union leaders or business leaders and, if I were to intervene on their behalf, I would have no question of privilege. As their spokesman, other remedies would be available to me. Our only remedy, however, is to appeal to you as protector of our rights and privileges.

What I pose as an ancillary to the question put to you by my hon. friend from Halifax is the criteria used in putting these names on a certain list—not what names are there but on what basis they were selected, against which list political candidates are checked. It seems to me that not knowing the criteria might assist you in finding a *prima facie* case. In other words, doubt about what that criteria might be, might assist Your Honour.

In my submission, the fact that this has been a practice for 30 years is irrelevant. No one knows what criteria have been used over that 30 years or whether they have changed from prime minister to prime minister or from commissioner to commissioner. The fact that the practice has developed over 30 years has nothing to do with the question of whether our rights and privileges may be affected.

We have no idea what criteria are used to put a certain name on a list against which the name of a candidate for political office may be checked to find if he belongs to a subversive group or has engaged in subversive activities, to use the words of the Solicitor General. Therefore, the assurance given by the Solicitor General on Friday about how the manual was used does not, in my view, affect the question of whether there is a question of privilege in this case.

Is Your Honour prepared to find that the threat of an impingement upon our rights is equal to an actual impingement? If there is a cloud over political candidates which may affect them, even though we cannot point to one candidate as the subject of electronic surveillance, is that threat sufficient for Your Honour to find there is a *prima facie* question of privilege? That is the ancillary argument I would put to the main argument advanced by the hon. member for Halifax.

In summary, sir, I reject the argument advanced by the Deputy Prime Minister on Friday to the effect that we seek special privileges. It is not special privileges we seek but a special forum in which we can look for redress or assistance when we think we have been affected. It is only in this House, and only through you, sir, that we can come to seek that special right.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Pinard (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, following the presentation of this new motion by the hon. member, it is clear that he refers to general surveillance. I think it is important, in the present debate, to point out that several speakers have suggested or, at least, seemed to have suggested that systematic surveillance has been exercised on candidates in federal elections.

*Privilege—Mr. Stanfield*

Now, if we refer to the facts or to the evidence given by the Solicitor General or the Deputy Prime Minister in the House last Friday, we realize that this allegation is not true. At the outset of my argument, Mr. Speaker, I stated that this has been categorically denied by the Solicitor General and the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada.

Never have we said, on this side of the House, that all candidates have been subjected to systematic surveillance. What has indeed been mentioned is that it is verified whether or not a candidate has a record. Verification is not surveillance, Mr. Speaker. And being a candidate in a federal election does not automatically rule out verification as to whether he or she has a record and whether he or she represents a threat to the security of the state.

So I think that anyone anxious to enter into federal politics is not automatically exempt from simple and normal scrutiny applied to any Canadian citizen. Does the candidate for public office have a record containing facts suggesting that person may represent a threat to the security of the state? I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that this does not constitute systematic surveillance of candidates, but rather a verification to know whether or not there is a record against that person.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, is in line with the first point I referred to. The Solicitor General of Canada has formally denied that any member of this House is the subject of any surveillance. If we take these two facts into account, first that there is no systematic surveillance of candidates, and second that no member of the House is the subject of any surveillance, I wonder how the privileges of hon. members can possibly be threatened or violated. If we are to hold a theoretical discussion on the way the RCMP arrives at its security standards about Canadian citizens, I submit we should not do so by way of a question of privilege before Parliament. Things would be different if one or more members of the House had been the subjects of surveillance. But that has been denied. So we have to take for granted what the Solicitor General says: no member of the House is the subject of surveillance. Therefore we cannot argue that the privileges of members are threatened or violated. As for electoral candidates, they do not come under any systematic surveillance but, as the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) said, it is a verification to know whether a candidate, who is an ordinary citizen, has a record.

Since this matter of checking on individuals in Canada, whether or not they are running for federal office, is now before an inquiry set up under an act of this Parliament—the McDonald commission was set up under the Public Inquiries Act, an act of this federal parliament, passed by us—since that inquiry is a valid, democratic institution whose purpose and mission is precisely to inquire into those situations, I say it would be a duplication to ask a committee of this House to check whether or not the RCMP has valid criteria on which to determine whether or not an individual who is a Canadian constitutes a risk to the security of the state.