

*Supply—Justice*

my long years in the House of Commons upon which the Prime Minister makes a statement on the estimates of another minister. I am not saying it has not been done before. I am simply saying it is a rare occasion and it underlines the importance which the Prime Minister and those who sit on this side of the house attach to this subject.

The committee may remember that the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam brought to my attention, and to the attention of the government, the procedure which was being followed by the Department of Justice and other departments with reference to this matter and I agreed to give the subject consideration, along with my colleagues. I believe the hon. gentleman, together with his hon. friends, thought that this consideration was taking too long but I am sure he will have realized this evening at once, not only by the statement which the Prime Minister has made but by the statement I am about to make, that this is a question which has to be considered in all its aspects, aspects which affect every department and agency of government. That is why a decision with reference to the procedure to be adopted in future has not been reached until now.

I would like at this juncture to make a more detailed statement concerning national security within the context of the statement on security policy by the Prime Minister. In light of the many recent expressions of interest in the means by which the government of Canada protects her secrets and those of her allies entrusted to her, and in light of continuing indications, here and elsewhere, that the need for such protection not only continues but continues to grow, I welcome this opportunity to contribute to a clearer understanding by the people of Canada of the issues involved in this vital, although often misunderstood area of human activity.

I need hardly remind this house of the dangers of permitting information about our defences, the defences of the western alliance or other matters essential to our security to fall into unfriendly hands. I need scarcely recall what happened many years back when certain matters were discussed here and outside. We know that there have been, over the years, undeniably effective efforts of espionage in Canada, in the United States, in the United Kingdom, elsewhere in the democratic countries of the west, and, indeed, through the world.

All the countries of the west know that in addition to the professional agents, a very effective group in securing and passing on vital and secret information are open or clandestine sympathizers with the communist ideology. In their minds they have another—perhaps they think a much higher—loyalty.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

In any event, there is no doubt but that they play a major role in securing information that others want for purposes unfriendly to our objectives.

Apart from the use of such allies or sympathizers, one of espionage's most effective tools has always been the exploitation of human vulnerability, whether of the body or of the mind. In recent years there has been a frightening concentration on the exploitation of human failings to achieve the ends of offensive intelligence. Any evidence of exploitable weakness, whether it be greed, lust, dishonesty or plain stupidity, is carefully documented and may be carefully nurtured. Eventually, through the patient accumulation of compromising evidence, or simply through a veiled threat that a relative may have some difficulty with the police, it is possible for an intelligence agent to apply pressures which may prove intolerable unless co-operation is forthcoming. If it is not, the evidence, whether it is real or concocted or both, is sent anonymously to employers, relatives and friends, often with the result that a promising career is ruined, not to speak of the personal effect on the individual himself.

Should there be any doubt in anyone's mind, let me say at once that these things have happened to Canadians, as we all know, and will probably happen again. For obvious reasons I do not propose to go further into this matter, but I should like it clearly understood that, for reasons such as I have given, the defensive security measures which have been developed over the years are intended not only to protect our secrets but to protect the individuals who, in having access to them, are thus automatically potential targets for ruthless attacks of the kind I have described.

I should like now to say something about the security screening arrangements which have been devised to prevent espionage, as distinct from those intended to anticipate and control subversive activities generally. I do so with some reluctance because the effectiveness of even these measures is usually reduced in providing information about them. At the same time, I fully appreciate how frustrating it is to members of this house as well as to the public generally, who are rightly concerned that individuals be treated fairly, to be faced with official silence on this vital subject. There will always be matters in this area which cannot be discussed fully in public if our defensive arrangements are to have any effect at all. I am sure all members of the house will agree with the principle of that statement. On the other hand, the effectiveness of these arrangements does not depend solely upon the measures or the individuals involved with them. They depend too upon the understanding and co-operation of all Canadians on