

Nickel Belt, have been subjected to electronic surveillance accidentally, coincidentally, intentionally, unintentionally or in any other way? If he does not know, will he be able to give us that information in the near future?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I was not in my seat and did not hear the full purport of the hon. gentleman's question.

Mr. MacKay: Is the Solicitor General, or is the Prime Minister, now in a position to say how many more members of parliament besides a former solicitor general and the hon. member for Nickel Belt have been subjected to electronic surveillance either accidentally, coincidentally or otherwise?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, on that point, I had intended to rise on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Nickel Belt yesterday. I have indicated outside the House that not even incidentally do we have any record of the hon. member for Nickel Belt being subjected to taping or to any other surveillance. With reference to any other members of parliament, I would like to check the record and advise the hon. gentleman. Perhaps I can provide him with that information.

Mr. MacKay: Steps are being taken in the United States to ascertain information concerning the background of Mr. Warren Hart's activities and details of his recruitment from the FBI. We were advised—I think last February—by the Prime Minister that there was no reason to suggest that the RCMP conducted itself like the FBI. We now have evidence that, in fact, the RCMP recruited someone from the FBI. Can the Solicitor General say whether this incident, if it is an isolated one, took place with the knowledge of the cabinet committee on security, the secretary of state for external affairs of the day, or at what level was this unusual arrangement allowed?

Mr. Blais: I would like to look at two aspects of the question; first, the nature of the investigations that are being conducted vis-à-vis the FBI and, second, I wish to indicate to the hon. gentleman that as I understand it Mr. Hart was not a member of the FBI. But I would like to provide the hon. member with information relating to that aspect of his question.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. COSSITT—NATIONAL SECURITY—VISIT OF SOLICITOR GENERAL AND HEAD OF SECURITY SERVICE TO HON. MEMBER'S OFFICE

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I believe this is one of the most serious questions of privilege a member could ever raise in the House of Commons. If hon. members on the government side will permit me to outline this question, I will do so as briefly, concisely, and accurately as possible.

Privilege

About noon today—I cannot state the time positively—I was visited by General Dare, head of the security service of the RCMP, and the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais), in my office.

It took some time, due to subsequent events, for me to realize that this is a question of privilege; otherwise, I would have given the required notice to the Chair.

General Dare and the Solicitor General discussed with me the fact that I have been raising in the House certain matters pertaining to national security. Hon. members are familiar with the matters I have been raising. The Solicitor General and General Dare asked me if I would turn over to them copies of any documents I have in my possession which came from the security service.

I was then shown a document which I was told was compiled by the RCMP, pertaining to myself. That document recommended various options the government had to deal with me if I did not comply with the request that I turn over copies of documents to the RCMP.

I remember three or four of those recommendations, which I will mention. One was that a search warrant be issued so that my office in the House of Commons could be searched. Another was that a search warrant could be issued with regard to my home and other premises. Another was that a warrant for my arrest could be issued by the Solicitor General. Presumably that would mean confinement in jail at some point. Another option was that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) might be prevailed upon to exert some pressure on me to give up these documents. Another option—and I am paraphrasing—was that perhaps the RCMP or the Solicitor General could prevail upon me as a good Canadian to surrender copies of such documents. I was asked to surrender them.

I told the Solicitor General that I have never had any intention to interfere with the national security of this country. I told him I would stick to that principle. The Solicitor General told me this morning that he felt that in some ways some of the things I have done perhaps interfered with such national security. Frankly, in the interest of national security I do not wish to repeat the points he raised, unless he wants me to do so. Nevertheless, I said to him that I would like time to consult counsel, to consider what I should do, and also to discuss this with the leader of my party. I said that as any Canadian I had the right to consult my lawyer, which I do. When someone is told he might be arrested or that his premises might be searched, he has the right to consult counsel.

The document I was shown had two columns. The column on the left contained what I have said in the House of Commons. The column on the right contained the actual facts according to the RCMP. I might say that in each case the facts, and what I have said, corresponded. General Dare and the Solicitor General therefore deduced that I had in my possession copies of two specific RCMP or security service documents.

I must mention another thing. I do not like to do this, but I think it is necessary. In that document there was included a