

Privilege—Mr. Lawrence

way they are so determined to keep him from testifying, so far at least, before the McDonald commission of inquiry.

I should like to contrast that with what is going on in the United States. In a recent edition of the *Globe and Mail* the following appeared:

Who says the Canadian system is better than the American?

In the United States, the government is giving \$1,000 cheques to citizens who had their mail intercepted by the CIA.

What a beautiful way to stimulate the economy, if we knew how many Canadians have had their mail intercepted.

Mr. Lawrence: It would cost too much.

Mr. MacKay: I suspect that is the truth. The article continues:

In Canada the victims of mail monitoring by the Mounties are getting beans all. Thus far the government has not even divulged who the victims were.

As I mentioned in my speech last week, certainly there has been a systematic attempt over the years, a highly sophisticated one in nearly every major city in the country, by the security service, authorized at highest levels, to intercept the mail of some people. In many cases I am sure the abuses would boggle the mind, if they were all brought to the attention of Canadians.

It continues:

Recently a federal appeals court affirmed a decision requiring the U.S. government to make payments to three people identified as targets by the CIA.

Citing this as the test case, attorney Melvin Wulf is now asking the government for the same \$1,000 settlement for the "tens of thousands" of others who had their mail snatched.

It is incredible that up to a few months ago the then postmaster general, the present Solicitor General (Mr. Blais), stood up in the House of Commons and solemnly assured us that mail was not being opened, as one of his predecessors assured the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham. I am making no reflection on the Solicitor General deliberately misleading anyone. But indeed, there was a facade or a front used to mislead people in this country and in this parliament, for one reason or another, for years and years and years, about mail openings.

I do not intend to speak long. I am sorry the Solicitor General is not present because I wanted to ask him a question. I should like to explore what was going on concerning the activities of the RCMP vis-à-vis the Parti Québécois in the last few years. I doubt there is anyone in the House of Commons who has any sympathy whatsoever with the political aims of the Parti Québécois. However, it is a legitimately elected party. This is not Iran; this is not a country where repressive measures are taken on the basis of political disagreement. At least I should hope not. In fact, we received some assurance in a letter from the right hon. Prime Minister to the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) last year. Page 4 of that letter reads as follows:

No person in Canada is immune from observation, surveillance or detection, if it is determined that such person has been or is engaged in activities that are defined in the Official Secrets Act as being subversive.

[Mr. MacKay.]

Prima facie, I am sure no one can complain about that. We recognize that the enemies of our country, who are doing things which they should not, should not be immune from surveillance or punishment simply because they belong to any organization, or because they happen to be members of the House of Commons, the Senate, or any other institution. I want to be fair, and if my impression is wrong I want members to correct me.

Based on my perusal of *Hansard* and my recollection of past statements by various members of the government, I have the impression that as far as the security service and the government are concerned, it was stated the Parti Québécois was never punished or harassed as such simply for being the Parti Québécois. There may have been some concern about terrorist elements attached to it going back to the 1960s, or infiltrating the party. The Prime Minister went on record and said that it was a very acceptable party, that it was democratically elected, and so on. As a matter of fact, on October 31, 1977, the then solicitor general said the following:

No democratic political party of any stripe can be, should be or ought to be the object of systematic surveillance by the RCMP. That has been made clear time and time again in this House by the Prime Minister.

He was replying to a question which was asked by the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent). He continued:

As to the other part of the question, where I think some confusion arises, the Prime Minister is obviously referring to the fact that this question concerning the computer tapes on which the lists of members of the Parti Québécois were included was brought to his attention at the end of last week or at the beginning of last week. I think it is as simple as that and the confusion once again rests in the mind of the reader.

At that time the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party was concerned, as he had every right to be, about the democratic process and what pressures, if any, were being brought to bear on the Parti Québécois which were improper, in so far as its legitimate political activities were concerned.

Personally I have no time for the Parti Québécois, but I should like to put some information on the record which may be of assistance, if it is not already known. Perhaps in some ways it will contradict the impression which I and other members of the House have as to what went on respecting sympathizers of the Parti Québécois. Perhaps some members are aware that there is a file called MC-83. As people with some knowledge know, it is the code name of a top secret file in the RCMP. Some of the contents of this file may have been disseminated to newspapers. I do not know whether that is the case or not, but I have every reason to believe that as far as the security service activities directed against the Parti Québécois are concerned, indeed there was a PQ desk in G section of the RCMP. It was a specific desk in G section devoted to the Parti Québécois. This is a very interesting situation.

The member who was in charge of that desk, Sgt. Maurice Goguen, may have testified already respecting operation HAM at one of the inquiries. But the situation is a little more intriguing than that. The RCMP source or contact with whom he was particularly concerned, was well placed in the provincial ministry of cultural affairs. The honourable François