

Security Intelligence Service

● (1420)

The Solicitor General may say that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police do not want this function, that they think it should be isolated from normal police duties on a national basis and put into a separate organization. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is, who is running the country? Is it the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his colleagues? Or is it the Superintendent of the RCMP? I do not care if the Superintendent of the RCMP does not want to perform this function; that is totally irrelevant. Sure, he wants to get into functions that are more normal police work. He wants the personnel in his force to perform functions more normally related to police activity. But that is no answer.

It is our right and our duty to impose that responsibility on the RCMP whether they like it or not. If the present Commissioner of the RCMP does not want to head a security force, which is an institution, and does not want to take the responsibility for internal and international security in this country, then quite frankly he had better find something else to do because the people of Canada are relying, not on the Superintendent of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but on the tradition built up over decades and generations to protect them in the way that they have always been protected. That is to establish a fair balance between the rights of citizens and the protection of citizens. That has been the function of the RCMP for decades and generations. That should continue to be the function of the RCMP, and that is the answer to this question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a few words on the Bill before the House today. I come from rural Saskatchewan where the RCMP polices many of the communities and small towns, and there have been a lot of questions asked about this Bill.

Mr. Roberts: Would you compare them to the Gestapo, like your colleague?

Mr. Nystrom: I have never compared them to the Gestapo, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: I wonder if we could have a little bit of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair is beginning to wonder whether the House would like to dispense with the services of the Chair. I appeal to all Hon. Members to respect the rules of debate. The Chair has recognized the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville.

Mr. Nystrom: I think we need the protection of the Chair, Mr. Speaker. I got up to speak and all of a sudden I heard calls of "Gestapo". I do not know what that is about.

Mr. Roberts: Your colleague said that.

Mr. Nystrom: Maybe that is some new Liberalism from the new Liberal leadership candidate, I am not sure. Perhaps he can pursue this in the Question Period.

In any event, I was saying that the RCMP police many of the small towns in Saskatchewan. Their training headquarters is in our capital city of Regina. Many questions are being raised about the new Bill before us as to how it will affect the financing of the RCMP, its role and so on. That is why I am interested in seeing as much political accountability and as much debate as possible in this House as well as seeing a good hearing at the committee stage.

What we are dealing with is a very important topic in any democracy in terms of the policing or security of a democracy. When we look at the establishment of a security force in the RCMP or outside the RCMP, we have to strike a very important balance. That balance is between giving the force adequate powers to do a proper job for the security of the nation and the people, and not giving the police too much power where they actually go overboard in trying to fulfil their mandate. I think it is a crucial balance that we are trying to reach here. It has to be a balance, on the one hand, of protecting individual rights and liberties of the citizens at large, and dealing adequately with genuine threats to the national security of Canada. That is what we must look at.

There is some concern being expressed by groups such as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association whether or not under this Bill the Government is going overboard by giving too broad a mandate, too sweeping a mandate, to the new security service and there would be too little parliamentary accountability. I have a transcript from CTV's *Question Period* which was aired February 5, 1984. Mr. Alan Borovoy, general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, was the guest. He was asked what he thought of the legislation that is now before Parliament. He said in part:

I think that the powers of intrusive surveillance are still needlessly broad. Under the terms of this Bill, as it is now formulated, Canadian citizens could have their conversations bugged, their mail opened, their homes surreptitiously searched, and their confidential records invaded, even though there isn't the slightest suggestion that any lawbreaking is involved.

He went on to say:

I think, at the very least, there should be a requirement that there be reasonable grounds to believe that there is a serious security-related breach of the law involved. I think, before they could get a warrant for any of those intrusive techniques against a citizen or a permanent resident, they should have to meet that kind of test.

In other words, the test of reasonable grounds. I am not a lawyer nor am I an expert in this area. I have immense respect for Alan Borovoy. I know he is respected on all sides of the House and by my friend, the Hon. Member for South West Nova (Miss Campbell). I was thinking of Central Nova but I knew that was not the riding. I know she feels exactly the same way. Perhaps she is more impressive than the Hon. Member for Central Nova (Mr. Mulroney) in terms of her contributions to debates in the House, and that is not very hard to do.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!