

Supply—Justice

authorities in other police forces, not generally to the members of other police forces, if a file is requested and proper entitlement to it is established.

With regard to the specific question, I can only say that not only is a file not made available generally but the existence of a file is not made known except to a person authorized to receive the information that a file exists. If a member of parliament, as the hon. gentleman states, had a portion of an R.C.M.P. file and was, as he said, flashing it around, I can only assume that it came into his possession improperly. If he were shown a file on a confidential basis in connection with some matter in which it was felt he might have had a legitimate interest then I can only say he was in gross breach of the confidence which was reposed in him when he was shown that portion of the file. A file would never be made available to anybody on the basis that it might be used on a political platform.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would pursue the point raised by the hon. member for Timiskaming when he said that in his case when he attempts to cross the international border there seems to be some evidence that there is information at the border that there is a file on him. I gathered from the account given that the border officials look into the file and see there is nothing there. Would that accord with the minister's information that there would be knowledge on the part of the border officials of the fact that there was even an inoperative file back in the office of the R.C.M.P.? In relation to this I express the view that if a file becomes inoperative then it is clear that there was nothing that needed to be investigated at all. If that is so, why should that file continue to exist at all?

Mr. Fulton: I understand the hon. member for Timiskaming is referring to the United States border officials, not the Canadian.

Mr. Peters: I presume the Canadian officials also. The file that I know of is at Detroit and Rouses Point.

Mr. Fulton: When the hon. gentleman is subjected to this questioning is it by the Canadian border officials or the United States?

Mr. Peters: I think it is the Canadian, whomever you have to see.

Mr. Fulton: If you are going across the border usually you have to report out at the Canadian immigration and report in at the United States customs and immigration. When you come back you report out at the

[Mr. Fulton.]

United States immigration and report in at Canadian customs and immigration.

Mr. Peters: I am not sure which it is.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Whichever way it is, does it not point up the situation? If there is what the minister refers to as an inoperative file, and if the knowledge in that inoperative file is placed in the hands of border officials on either side of the border, is that not in contravention of our concepts of civil liberties?

Mr. Fulton: We are talking so much in the dark here that I find it difficult to give a definite answer. If the information were in the hands of the United States border officials then, of course, we would have no way of regulating what they did with it, even if it were inoperative.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Who gave them the Canadian file. How would they get it?

Mr. Fulton: The information might have come to their attention in any one of a number of ways and I am going to suggest a way which will show how difficult it is to deal with this case in broad generalities and without knowing what are the facts. It is quite possible, for instance, that there may be a notorious criminal with the same name as that of the hon. gentleman. That is not a far-fetched possibility. His name is not an unusual one, and therefore it would be quite normal for our border officials, in normal co-operation with the United States border officials, to be informed—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There might be a two-gun Fulton.

Mr. Fulton: That is quite possible. The Canadian officials might be informed that this person may be crossing the border. Somebody turns up with that name and the proper officials on both sides of the border would check to make sure whether he is the man on whom they have the file and for whom we are watching, or whether he is somebody else, let us say, Smith, other than the one in the file. I do not think any hon. member would object either to that exchange of information between ourselves and the United States authorities or to our border people or their border people keeping those files on hand. That may not be the explanation of the case of the hon. gentleman, but I do not know what the situation is in his case, in the absence of concrete information. It seems to me that what we are all indulging in is speculation that will not help anybody.

Mr. Cameron: Perhaps I can clear up that part of the situation by completing the story