

worth much more than the \$28,000 referred to by the Minister, as he himself acknowledged when he paid municipal taxes based on a \$6.2-odd million valuation, unless of course the Minister is utterly incompetent.

But I would like to deal with another aspect of his press release, in which the Minister confirmed having provided the RCMP with the letter he received on August 8, 1988, from Mr. H.D. Hyland.

What he failed to say is at what point in time that letter was provided to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. And I know Mr. Hyland has not yet been questioned by the RCMP. Therefore, what has the Minister been doing with that letter between August 5 and last weekend?

• (1420)

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am very anxious to make a comment on the whole of this case, but unfortunately, because of the RCMP investigation, I am precluded from doing so.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: I would remind Hon. Members that, while I understand their interest in this case, the Hon. Minister is trying to respond to a question asked by one of their colleagues and they should extend him the courtesy of being able to do so. The Hon. Minister.

Mr. McInnes: Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members cry "shame". If I did try to pre-judge this case the Hon. Member would be the very first person in this House saying that I improperly interfered with an RCMP investigation.

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PUBLIC WORKS

MINISTER'S HANDLING OF OFFICIAL'S LETTER—SALE OF MOISIE LANDS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are not asking questions having to do with the affair that the Minister tells us the RCMP is now investigating. The simple question put to him is about his conduct as a Minister. That question is: having acknowledged that he received the letter on or before August 5, when did he do something with it and what did he do with it?

It is his conduct we are questioning, not the conduct involving the sale of the land.

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, and I will continue to repeat, that while I am very anxious to comment fully on this file, of which I have and have had total knowledge, the matter is the subject of an

investigation by the RCMP. They will report soon enough and then the Hon. Member can ask me any question he wishes.

BIDDING PROCEDURE—LEGAL OPINIONS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to another aspect of the matter, the bidding procedure. In the questioning last week Mr. Hylands was quoted accurately from his tape as indicating that the Department had legal opinions condemning the bidding procedure followed. I want to ask the Minister about those legal opinions.

Does he have them? Has he reviewed them? If the procedures did not meet government standards or the standards they should have, what is the Minister going to do about it?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, no legal opinions were ever given to me at any time during the course of this particular matter. Legal opinions have now been brought to my attention. Nevertheless, I reiterate and confirm that we must and should, in the interests of all those people who may or may not be prejudiced as a result of the investigation, and in fairness, let the RCMP continue and finish its investigation.

[Translation]

MOISIE AFFAIR—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and concerns his conduct as a Minister of the Crown upon receipt of the letter from Mr. Hyland about August 5, which is some seven weeks ago.

Can the Minister indicate . . . The questions do not concern the conduct of the RCMP, but of the Minister before the RCMP investigation was launched. The RCMP received the letter from the Minister.

How long did the Minister take to decide to give the letter to the RCMP after he received it? Did the Minister turn over the letter right away, because of the very serious allegations made by Mr. Hyland, or did he delay for some time, perhaps until this week? If there were delays, why?

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I suppose the Hon. Member might temper his remarks if he knew what was in the letter. I have indicated that I had the letter. It is now in the hands of the RCMP. I will refrain from making further comment until they have completed their inquiry.

[Translation]

APPARENT DELAY IN FORWARDING LETTER TO RCMP—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, we have not seen the letter, but we have heard the tape recording by Mr. Hyland that apparently contains the same allegations as