

Canada is dependent on trust in the policies and procedures governing its activities. That is true, and it should be so.

Will a royal commission of inquiry really wipe the slate clean and restore public confidence? I certainly hope so. But there again, will it really be able to get to the truth of the matter and clarify the situation while restoring public trust in the RCMP? Be that as it may, if I could do anything to help clear up the matter, I would be eager to cooperate. It is in that frame of mind that I read the statement of the minister today. Further on, it says: And whereas the maintenance of that trust requires that full inquiry be made into the extent and prevalence of investigative practices or other activities involving members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that are not authorized or provided for by law.

I am somewhat broken-hearted to see that again the province of Quebec is involved in this. The government of the province of Quebec. I see the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) who is saying no with his head, but if the newspapers are telling the truth, an investigation will be carried out in the province of Quebec in connection with the break-in at L'Agence de Presse Libre du Québec. Mr. Speaker, a provincial government and a federal government are both looking into the activities of our police forces. And in view of the current political climate, I really wonder if this is not likely to influence those who are in charge of these investigations. If only we could be convinced that they will cooperate for the general public well-being, I would be less concerned then to see that under two governments two inquiries will be held at the same time on the same matter. I understand that the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) added in his statement that the inquiry commissioners will go farther in that matter.

In conclusion, I hope at least that a very serious inquiry will be made and that it will not result in confrontation with the Quebec Minister of Justice. I hope that Quebec City and Ottawa will try to serve well the interest of justice so that our policemen responsible for the security of Canadians will regain their confidence and the public will be able to cooperate efficiently with these people responsible for the interest and protection of the public. If we fail to do so, doubts will still be in the air, I am afraid. I am not overly impressed but I fear that the new generation has somewhat less respect than we do for our policemen who generally carry out their duties sometimes at the risk of their lives. Anyway, I am afraid about the result of that inquiry. I hope that it will be properly made, that it will give good results and that we reach the goal set.

● (1600)

[English]

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My point of order has to do with the matter which was raised earlier by my colleague. It is appropriate to raise it now in the form of a point of order because we have reached a stage in the proceedings where members, under the provisions of the Standing Orders, are entitled to direct questions to the minister based on his statement.

#### *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*

My point of order is this: a few days ago the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) attempted to circumvent the Standing Orders by bootlegging what was an oral statement through the provisions of Standing Order 41(2), which provides for the tabling of documents. Today we see the same kind of procedure. Under the provisions of Standing Order 15(3) the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) rises in his place to make a statement, and the operative part of that statement, namely, the terms of reference, are not read by him. He has to have them tabled. It is a fact that these terms of reference have already been distributed publicly to the press, but they have been denied to members of the House. Consequently I am being denied the opportunity to ask questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Of course I shall allow the hon. member to continue, but there is a practical difficulty, as I am sure the hon. member will realize. I should like the hon. member to address himself to the difficulty, and that is, the order of calling of business is the tabling of documents first and statements by ministers second. Under the circumstances, the minister could scarcely table the document before he made the statement, because the document relates only to the statement. There would have been a practical difficulty if the minister had attempted to table documents on terms of reference of a royal commission which he had not announced to the House.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid you misunderstood me. I was not suggesting that the minister should use Standing Order 41 to table the document. If he is going to make a statement under Standing Order 15(3), he should make the full statement and not try to circumvent the rule by asking the permission of the House to table the operative part of the statement. In effect he has not made a complete statement. The Standing Order makes provision not only for replies by representatives of the other parties, but also makes provision for members to direct questions to the minister, based on his statement. How can I direct questions to the minister, based on a statement setting up an inquiry into the operations of the RCMP, if I do not have before me and I do not know what the terms of reference of the inquiry are?

This is clearly an abuse of the Standing Order. If ministers are to be allowed to abuse Standing Orders in this manner, then I would suggest that by the same token we are going to be denied our rights under the Standing Orders. If Your Honour is not prepared to rule now, then you should take the question under advisement. There was not a great deal in what the minister had to say, apart from the appointment of the commission. The operative part of the minister's statement was not read into the record; it has not been tabled; we do not know what it is; and I suggest the minister should be directed to read that part of his statement into the record.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know if hon. members want to contribute to the point of order or want to ask questions. I will take the point of order under advisement, but in the circumstances I am having great difficulty. The minister could not