

men are young and, of course, it stands to reason they are not as experienced as the more senior officers. I was just wondering if, when a situation arises in which an officer believes there are reasonable grounds for thinking that a capital offence has been committed, the minister or the Department of Justice would not consider flying in men to visit these centres, men trained in scientific and legal matters and experienced in this type of investigation, because I feel this would indeed be doing a great service and it would at the same time be assisting the younger officers in these smaller communities. I should like to hear the views of the Minister of Justice and the commissioner on this subject, to see whether the practice might not be improved.

Mr. Fulton: At the present time there are means available for flying in special investigators in serious cases, such as capital cases, where it is considered necessary or desirable to do so. I suggest, therefore, that if in any such case a special investigator was not flown in it is because the commanding officer did not consider it necessary. However, the commanding officer may call for such assistance if he considers it desirable.

Mr. Christian: I just want to say that I know of a number of cases from my own experience—one involving a capital case and another a drug case—where it would have been of advantage to have followed such a course. I assume that if the officer concerned were to telephone to the main R.C.M.P. headquarters permission for assistance to be flown out would be given.

Mr. Fulton: In the province from which my hon. friend and I come a request would presumably go to headquarters in Victoria, and unless there were such demands on the available resources that they could not all be met it would be a matter for the judgment of the officer in command of the division whether a special investigator should be flown in or not. There could be errors of judgment, but the facilities are there except in very exceptional circumstances where the resources might be overstrained.

Mr. Christian: May I ask the minister whether consideration could not, in any event, be given the question of whether an improvement might be made?

Mr. Fulton: Naturally we are always prepared to consider anything which will improve the administration of the work of the force. Resources are not unlimited but we would be glad to know if at any time the lack of dealing with a particular case was

due to the lack of facilities or just what were the circumstances. Therefore it would be helpful if the hon. member would let us know privately what two cases he has in mind and we would be glad to look into them.

Mr. Regier: I wonder if the minister could inform the committee whether any of the municipalities in British Columbia have terminated their agreements with the R.C.M.P. since the recent rather severe increases in the price to municipal governments of the services of the force? Have there been any grievances which have been entered by the municipal governments?

Mr. Fulton: I am informed that there was one municipality in British Columbia which employed the services of one man which has terminated the contract. I recall at least one if not more municipalities in British Columbia that have requested the assignment of additional personnel.

Mr. Regier: I wonder if the minister could explain for the benefit of British Columbia members why when at the time this program was first initiated, I believe some five or six years ago, the agreements that were offered the municipalities were so very one-sided, so much so that most municipalities felt completely unable to resist the offer that was being made. They were offered the services of the force at a ridiculously low rate. However once the municipalities had abolished their own municipal police forces, then almost every year amazing increases were imposed upon the municipalities.

We all know that the increases, or at least a measure of them, were completely warranted by rising wages and the rising of other expenses but the ratio of the increases was quite beyond any possible increase in either the wages of the men or the expense of having the men employed. It appears to some at least almost as if there was a deliberate policy followed of luring the municipalities into the abolition of their own forces at the time and that now the department is beginning to tax the municipalities for a fairer and more equitable share of the cost I wonder if the minister would like to offer some comment about that.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, I would say here on the basis of my own recollection of the situation in British Columbia that the history of the matter is actually that the municipalities which gave up their municipal police forces did so at a time when the R.C.M.P. was not responsible for the policing of the province but when we had our own British Columbia police force and the arrangements then would be made between the municipality and the British Columbia police force.