

*Oral Questions*

## INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO RCMP

● (1420)

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question put by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I answered immediately that the decision I took was, I thought, the appropriate one. I did not close any doors for the future in regard to what might take place pursuant to events that might transpire. Obviously, this is a matter that I view with great seriousness. Otherwise I would not have acted as I did.

In regard to the specific question raised by my right hon. friend, a question which has been raised by others, a request for a commission of public inquiry, I have been advised by the law officers of the Crown that in the present circumstances it is not appropriate for the Government to establish a public commission of inquiry. The advice received by me from the senior law officers of the Crown is that, given the seriousness of the information provided to the RCMP, a commission of inquiry would prejudice the investigation of the RCMP, could lead to the abandonment of the investigation, and it could ultimately prejudice prosecution of any individuals guilty of criminal acts. That is the opinion given to me by the chief law officers of the Crown and that is consistent with their views.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Are you going to table that opinion?

**Mr. Mulroney:** I think that is very much in the interests of the Canadian people.

## REASON FOR RCMP INQUIRY

**Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury):** Mr. Speaker, our opinion is that the judicial inquiry should precede the criminal investigation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Frith:** I would refer again to the letter of September 9, 1985, in which the Prime Minister said:

The effect, all too frequently, has been simply to substitute an appointed decision-maker for an elected one, and to leave Parliament in the invidious and frustrating position of not being able to—exact accountability.

Wasn't the real reason the Prime Minister appointed the RCMP was to avoid the larger issue of political corruption in the highest circles of government?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, what a preposterous suggestion! We are now hearing from the Liberal Opposition that a public inquiry should precede a criminal inquiry in prosecution. The object of the exercise of handing it over to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for a full and complete investigation and prosecution is to make sure that no one escapes the full effect of the law. That is why it was done.

**Mr. Frith:** I need not remind the Prime Minister of the Stevens inquiry.

**Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister directed the RCMP to undertake the investigation of all the parameters of the Oerlikon affair, did he direct the RCMP to go beyond the duties outlined under Section 18 of the RCMP Act, or was a verbal order given? Was a letter sent to the Commissioner of the RCMP outlining the parameters of the investigation or was an Order in Council made? I would like the Prime Minister to table the relevant documents that led to the directions given to the RCMP in this investigation.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I hope that my hon. friend is not inadvertently trying in any way to frustrate the RCMP in the conduct of its inquiry. The instructions are very clear and were contained in the statement I issued. The Government has requested the RCMP to conduct a complete—underline complete—investigation into that matter, and that means exactly what it says.

## PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows very well that the mandate of the RCMP is not at all to deal with conflict of interest guidelines. Those guidelines are the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Canada.

I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister, or to the Deputy Prime Minister who has responsibility for the administration of conflict of interest guidelines. The Deputy Prime Minister said yesterday that one of the reasons for requesting the resignation of the former junior Transport Minister was the possible violation of conflict of interest guidelines. Given that it is his responsibility for the administration of these guidelines, could he tell us why he has not looked into the guidelines in this context, assessed the behaviour of the former Minister, and reported clearly to the House whether or not in his opinion there has been a violation of the conflict of interest guidelines?

● (1425)

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the facts emerged, the Minister was removed from office, and all the information was immediately turned over to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for full investigation. We are now advised by the law officers of the Crown that any action by a commission of inquiry or so on at this time might inhibit and impede the effective and proper prosecution of these matters. I would think that my hon. friend would agree with that procedure as being quite in line with the objectives we are all seeking, the prosecution of any wrongdoing and the upholding of the highest standards of public morality.

I indicated previously, and I assure my hon. friend again, that nothing I have said will in any way prevent us, at an