

Oral Questions

have an independent inquiry into this matter so that we will know and the public of Canada will know that the results are going to be made available to all interested parties, which is to say this parliament, and not just the people who happen to be mentioned or involved in the investigation?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important in the conduct of government that before inquiries of this kind are launched there should be a basis of fact and not just simply charges and innuendo put out by somebody who is not a member of this legislature. That is what we are doing. We are now asking the police to investigate the facts. If they find there are sufficient grounds for a prosecution, it will be launched. If there is not and the police believe an investigation is necessary we will follow that advice. Even if the police report were of such a character that we felt it desirable to have a public inquiry we would do so. I am sure all members of the House would believe it is better to have a foundation of fact than it is to have a foundation of gossip.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on a point of order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby asked the Minister of Labour if he would make provision for an industrial inquiry commission to go into the question of waterfront violence, the minister's reply was that this should wait until the current investigation by the RCMP had been completed. My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that since that answer was given it has been made clear that the RCMP investigation is only into the allegations regarding certain individuals and not into the question of waterfront violence. I wonder, therefore, if the Minister of Labour should not now be given a chance to answer the question about an inquiry into the broader subject, that of waterfront violence.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated that I first asked for the investigation by the RCMP with respect to allegations made against officials. It was a very wide sweeping statement first made by the author and I felt this was the only way it could be clarified one way or another, to have this type of investigation and that included politicians, ministers and all officials in the broader context. My colleague, the Solicitor General has indicated that. He also indicated that the RCMP came back during the course of last week and indicated that they felt with respect to the charges of violence that it was a matter for enforcement of the Criminal Code and fell within the jurisdiction of the province.

An hon. Member: That is nonsense.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): You may feel it is nonsense and you have a right to that opinion. Let me state what I know to be a fact today. The responsibility for enforcement of the Criminal Code falls within the provinces. As the President of the Privy Council has indicated,

[Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain).]

the Minister of Justice has contacted his provincial counterpart to see if this type of material, allegations of wrongdoing, violence, and so on could be forthcoming and with this as a base we could form a judgment as to whether some type of inquiry is warranted. That is going on right now.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I should like to indicate in terms of what I think an implication was about interim reports of the RCMP being revealed to me, that I will have to come to a judgment as I suppose every member of government will have to at some stage, as to whether a full type of inquiry in addition to what is going on in terms of the police investigation, is warranted. Naturally, if I have to assume that responsibility I see the reports.

An hon. Member: Nonsense.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): My only answer to this is that I have no control over the reports. They are RCMP reports. The RCMP, when it has the material, can decide to lay charges at any time without any suggestion from the government of any kind. Knowing the integrity of the RCMP I trust they will continue to take that posture.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre raised what was obviously a supplementary question on the basis of a point of order. The minister has made his contribution to the same point of order with what was obviously an answer to the supplementary question. There is the right of course for hon. members to pursue vigorously a topic of this kind. There is no question about that, and balanced against that are the rights of other members who have other questions. I only ask if hon. members want to pursue the matter that they do so by way of questions if indeed questions they have, and not under the guise of points of order.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF INTERIM REPORT OF ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have one question arising out of what the minister said. I listened to him very carefully but there was a little noise. I thought he quoted from the police report that he had seen. I use as my precedent the occasion when a former solicitor general quoted from certain letters dealing with the case in which Carmen Perrault was mixed up, the Geoffroy case. I raised that with the former Speaker. The Speaker of that day ordered the former solicitor general to file the documents. Now that the minister has quoted from the report, and I think he did that, I think the investigation by the RCMP which has been shown these people should now be laid before the House of Commons by an order of the Speaker.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I did not quote from the document and I think that any examination of the record will show that. I do not believe it is proper—

An hon. Member: That's right. It certainly is not.