

Oral Questions

to clarify that because it is fundamentally important in terms of the preservation of civil liberties in the country. Most specifically, he did not answer the question about the observation of internal financial operations. A reference has been made to the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Has any branch of the armed services monitored the internal operations of that union, including an assessment of the possibility of the electoral success or the contrary of certain candidates for office? Has it studied the financial operations of that union?

● (1422)

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have no information that such information has been kept.

An hon. Member: Have you asked?

Mr. Danson: I have asked and I have rather comprehensive reports from my people as of today. There are still questions I am asking which I will be asking tomorrow and if we do not have all the information on that I will be asking the day after tomorrow. We are quite certain that we do not engage in such covert operations. We must have information to be available to respond to these civil authorities if we are called upon and the chief of the defence staff must have that information to measure the level of his responsibility.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER McDONALD COMMISSION WILL INVESTIGATE ARMED FORCES

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) on behalf of my constituents that I am most grateful to him for having authorized the Royal 22nd Regiment's band to be part of the celebrations on Remembrance Day.

On that subject, my question is indeed directed to the Solicitor General. Since on that occasion yesterday I had the opportunity to meet many military people and since news agencies have reported that the McDonald commission will probably inquire not only into the RCMP but also into the Canadian Armed Forces, could the minister tell the House if this news which has been spread among the population is true and if so could he justify such a decision?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, there has not been any change so far in the terms of reference of the McDonald commission which was requested to examine procedures and practices within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Since this piece of news has now been released, Mr. Speaker, could the minister advise the House whether he will ascertain where it came from and whether it is false, for it is of concern to some people and to the military, and the Canadian people have a right to know. If all our institutions are to be investigated and if as much time is spent discussing the possibility of investigating the Armed Forces as is spent now discussing the RCMP, I feel the

[Mr. Broadbent.]

Canadian economy will suffer, because administrative matters are thus disregarded.

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his kind remarks concerning our democratic institutions and his suggestion that they are essential to the preservation of our present government system. I can assure the hon. member that I shall try to trace to their origin this piece of news and the findings he made yesterday during the Remembrance Day celebrations.

[English]

CONNECTION BETWEEN SECURITY PLANNING GROUP AND ARMED FORCES SECURITY GROUP

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Would he be kind enough to tell the House what connection there is between the security and intelligence directorate of his department and the security and planning analysis group which is part of the Solicitor General's office? Which way do the intelligence reports flow or do they communicate with each other on a regular basis?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, we have a liaison officer in the police and security planning branch, a captain and an NCO clerk, I believe, who maintain liaison between the two branches. There is an interchange of information which we can pass on for assessment.

● (1427)

Mr. McKinnon: Could the minister also tell the House whether the operational direction given to the armed forces security directorate originates with the security and planning analysis group or whether it originates with someone else, and, if it should be the latter case, with whom?

Mr. Danson: It originates within our own intelligence services through Brigadier-General Davros who reports to the CDS. Our work is confined to the armed forces and involves only the armed forces and direction is not taken from the security and planning analysis group.

NUMBER OF BRIEFINGS GIVEN MINISTER BY INTELLIGENCE UNIT

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Would the minister inform us approximately how often during his first year as Minister of National Defence he was personally briefed on security matters by his intelligence and security directorate?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): As far as major briefings are concerned, I was briefed shortly after I came to the department. I have had at least two briefings since then, and, in the last few days, several.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): No doubt!