

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

we in management are doing a pretty good job for them in general pay negotiations I think they will be reasonably content to carry on.

I think, sir, it is fair to say from the evidence that was given by Commissioner Higgitt, a truly excellent witness before the committee, that there was a sort of split in this respect. He would like to have seen things go on as they had been going on, but on the other hand he could not see that they could go on this way. That perhaps sounds like Alice in Wonderland talk, and I think that is exactly the position our witness found himself in. So the other day in the House of Commons I dared to raise this matter with the Solicitor General.

I cannot say I was dissatisfied with his answer, because I know that when someone schooled at the feet of the late Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King gives you any kind of answer, you must be prepared to accept it. None the less, I thought I would press our dear friend, the Solicitor General, to come here this evening and answer the question further. I will boil it down to this, Mr. Speaker, and this is my question to the Solicitor General: Would the government welcome the recommendation from the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs that the matter of overtime pay for members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police be considered by the government?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Answer in the affirmative.

An hon. Member: Agreed.

Mr. Bell: Now get out of that one.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, there are two rather interesting questions raised by the hon. member tonight. One is the procedural question emphasized by the new question he raised at the conclusion of his remarks, and the other is the substantive question of overtime pay for members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The first question is a purely procedural one and is rather interesting. He apparently is asserting the proposition that this motion to

adjourn, and the right to debate it, can be used for a discussion of current matters while proceedings on those matters are before the standing committees of the House of Commons. This matter is before a standing committee of the House of Commons, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs which is examining the estimates of the department. In that examination a question has been raised and an answer given.

When the hon. member raised the question the other day, despite his remarks about my reply I would point out to him that, as I said, when the committee completes its work and reports back to the House, the government will consider all the matters that have come before it. That is the exact position. But I would point out to hon. members that they are making a new departure tonight in permitting this matter to be debated at this time, because now items in respect of all matters currently before standing committees of the House may be debated here concurrently.

As to the substantive question, which is a matter of real importance, the situation is that the RCMP, in addition to their specialized duties with regard to federal statutes, police eight of the ten provinces, and the two territories. A large part of the work is done in a vast area with a small population. This means that many detachments are small with regard to the number of personnel. In some places there are only two men. I invite hon. members to consider the question of overtime in parts of the Northwest Territories. There is every indication that the men do not want this problem handled, as the hon. member pointed out, by way of overtime pay. The point is, how to deal with the extra requirements put on them. It is unrealistic to blandly assume in relation to a force covering so much of the area—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the minister, but his time has expired.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.