

*Government Orders*

certainly that would have been a cause celebre covered by the media and others.

I want to stop just for a moment about the media handling the case. It is interesting that the RCMP Public Complaints Commission indicates the media is an effective way for people to get their case considered. That is not true. I had on a number of occasions talked to people in the media about the coverage of some of these things that were well within the public domain. I had some of the issues that I had picked up as files in this matter referred to me by the media. When I asked why they did not cover them, they said: "It is not in our best interest to cover them. For example, if we run afoul of the local RCMP, we may have problems driving our motor vehicle from A to B. We may find that when we phone the RCMP for information, we are cut off. We cannot report the news because the RCMP will not co-operate".

This is not my story. This is the story from a number of media agencies in the area I represent when I said, here is the thing that is happening in your community. It is a serious matter. Why have you not covered it? They said: "It is risky to do that". It is personally risky. It is risky from the business point of view when running a newspaper when you need access to the RCMP for the news. If you report things that the RCMP do not view with favour, then you are going to find that you are completely cut off and you do run some personal risks. These are stories conveyed to me by journalists, not just from one agency but from several agencies on the matter.

The critical point here is that we have an agency that has been in business since September 30, 1988. It has shown itself to be a determined agency in the investigation of complaints against the RCMP and that in prosecuting those have on behalf of citizens who have complaints, prosecuted their responsibilities very well.

At times the RCMP officer and the complainant get together and the RCMP officer says: "I was dead right. This was within the law. You made an error and that is what happened". That is the end of it. The individual

gets a clear explanation. The RCMP officers lays out his side of the story and is completely vindicated.

At other times, and I have seen this happen, the matter is investigated and an apology goes forward from the RCMP that states: "There may have been in the heat of the moment some things that do not follow policy, but the circumstances were so uncertain that this is what happened and we apologize for the inconvenience". The complainant accepts that apology and that is the end of it.

Other circumstances can be far more serious. Perhaps excessive use of force is implied and the individual has been badly beaten. There has been a great deal of damage and the matter goes to a hearing, or goes to court and matters take their course. Those are extremely rare.

The RCMP is a very fine police force. We see that on a daily basis. Rarely are there incidents that create havoc, that break the confidence of the public in the law enforcement agency. We must have an impartial body set apart with resources to investigate, and we must have the legal authority to investigate effectively, and prosecute to the point where some acceptable resolution occurs.

The administration of the RCMP and the office of the Solicitor General should be seriously looking at making sure that in a democracy the police are there to use force against citizens to enforce the law. It becomes a very grey area in some cases or there is actual clear misbehaviour on the part of an individual in using that force to carry out the law or the procedures. We need that agency to be there to carry on a separate investigation.

It would be my hope that it would not be necessary to get up and debate extensively in this House a motion that argues on behalf of the opposition that the RCMP Public Complaints Commission has to be maintained. It has to have additional resources, both human resources and financial resources. This House should not be looking at gutting that agency, but should be giving serious consideration to implementing the recommendations that are outlined in the last annual report to strengthen the hand of the agency.

At this time I would leave that particular area with the admonition that we will be looking seriously at moving an amendment. Hopefully, out of that amendment, we can see the government co-operate with the opposition members to separate these two agencies, maintain the separation, provide the human and financial resources