

Oral Questions

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the daily *La Presse* of September 22, 1977, the following is clearly stated and I quote:

Treasury Board President Robert Andras has suggested that family allowances might be reduced next year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, could the minister give a few details on the matter?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question as translated to me the day before yesterday appeared to indicate he was asking me if I was relating some hypothetical action with regard to family allowances to the servicing of the public debt. I made no such statement. I am not quite sure what variation on that question the hon. member is implying now.

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Speaker, I will merely say to the minister that if he would like me to do so, I could send him a copy of that article published in *La Presse* concerning his statement.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE MAIL FOR LAYCRAFT COMMISSION AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS NOT INTERCEPTED

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. It is further to one I asked of him on October 31 when I inquired about the possible means of surveillance, including mail interception, with respect to the Laycraft commission of inquiry. I think the Solicitor General will remember this. With reference to the latest number of reports that have been dealt with, has he anything further to add to his answer or has he made any further inquiries?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what the hon. member referred to in the question he previously asked me concerning the Laycraft inquiry. Perhaps he could refresh my memory.

Mr. MacKay: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to do that. It was on October 31, page 424 of *Hansard*. It was further to a question raised by the hon. member for New Westminster. I asked the Solicitor General at that time whether he could give us an unequivocal assurance that among any other possible methods of surveillance of the Laycraft commission that mail interception was not used. At that time he gave me a very substantial answer to the effect that to the best of his knowledge this was not the case. I was wondering now in view of some of the other matters that have been raised if he could expand his answer and give us the same kind of assurance, particularly to the rest of Canadians, and not restrict it only to the members of the Laycraft commission of inquiry. Has he asked about this?

[Mr. Allard.]

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, on the question of the Laycraft inquiry, I do not recall the hon. member's reference to the mail being intercepted in connection with the attorney general, the solicitor general of Alberta or the Laycraft inquiry itself. In that regard, my answer would remain the same. However, on the more general question, I assume he is referring to the CBC news report last night concerning possible interception of the mail by the RCMP security service, I understand under the code name "cathedral". I had the opportunity of checking into the matter with senior officers of the force this morning and asked questions concerning the code name "cathedral". The code name "cathedral" goes back to 1954. In some instances, after my examination of the files with senior officers of the Crown, it clearly happened that the mail has actually been opened by the RCMP security service. Because of that, I referred the whole matter to the Attorney General of Canada and also to the McDonald royal commission of inquiry.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POSSIBILITY NDP WAS OBJECT OF SECURITY CHECK

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer and assure him that if he checks in *Hansard*, my question indeed was specific on mail surveillance. I want to ask a related question on the matter of surveillance in general. Further to reports that Daniel Celovosky was perhaps the victim of security considerations when he was discharged from a militia unit and further to current reports in the *Globe and Mail* that this may have been as a result of the surveillance that was alleged on behalf of or toward the NDP, the federal members and staff, of which one was his father, can the Solicitor General give us any assurance, or if not will he look into this case to make certain that the NDP was not targeted by the RCMP or the security service in any way that would smack of interference with a legitimate political party.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as far as the question of security clearance of an individual is concerned, if he was dismissed from a militia unit, I assume that the proper person to ask a question of would be the Minister of National Defence. We have always stated in connection with the surveillance of political parties the security service does not have a mandate to systematically survey any legitimate political party.

MINISTER'S KNOWLEDGE OF PRACTICE OF INTERCEPTING MAIL

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. It is with reference to the answer he gave my colleague, the hon. member for Central Nova. I believe the Solicitor General said the matter of postal mail interception has been referred to the royal commission. In all the briefings he has bragged about so eloquently, did he never know that the RCMP may have infiltrated the post office? If that is not the case, did he never ask the security officers briefing him, are you or are you not contrary to the