

Adjournment Debate

know, the security service reports, in theory, to the Commissioner of the RCMP. Actually, it is under the direction of a director-general who is not a member of the force. General Dare came from outside the force, as did his predecessor. The director-general reports directly to the Solicitor General of Canada and to the Prime Minister as well as to the Commissioner. So in the case of the security service, whose people stand accused of illegal acts, there is a very real question as to whether the activities of the security service are under the control of the Commissioner of the RCMP. There is a very real question as to that, and that is an important distinction for the government to begin to make clear to the people of Canada.

The more broad, fundamental question is: "at whose direction did the members of the security service act?" The answer to that at this stage of our knowledge in the House of Commons is that we do not know. We do not know what the Prime Minister or solicitors general said to the director-general of the security service. We do not know if the instructions which were given regarding the FLQ were so broad that any reasonable member of the security service would believe that he simply was doing what his master had directed him to do when he was in breach of the law of Canada. We do not know those things because we have not been told by the Government of Canada just what is going on here, and, indeed, we may never know because ministers refuse to give information here on the floor of the House.

Today in answer to a question of mine, the Prime Minister said that the government may put limits upon the testimony it gives to the McDonald inquiry regarding precisely what was the role of the Prime Minister and what was the role of the then solicitor general in the actions which occurred. Again the Prime Minister is setting himself up to blame another civil servant, because what he said in his answer to me today was that if they do not tell the whole truth to the McDonald inquiry the people they will blame are the law officers of the Crown, rather than accepting the responsibility themselves.

● (1807)

What we have been concerned with throughout this piece is that ministers have tried not to know what they should have known. That was the case with the Minister of Supply and Services when he was solicitor general and deliberately did not raise questions as to what had been done. Even though he received correspondence which should have caused any reasonable minister to ask questions, he did not. Now, of course, we have the Prime Minister making it clear that in the occasional briefings—in the regular briefings held by the government in these matters, the attitude of the government is, by and large, a passive one, receiving information, not asking questions as to how the security services are carrying out the general direction of the Government of Canada. What disturbs us—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) that his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that in this kind of debate the leader of the opposition (Mr. Clark) has seven minutes speech time and the government has only four minutes to reply, I will have to stick rather tightly to what has already been said by the hon. leader of the opposition. Briefly put, Mr. Speaker, having listened to the leader of the opposition and having noted that his presence in the House at this time of day is rather extraordinary, we can wonder about the purpose of his motion. I for one thought that he was referring to the exchange of questions that occurred yesterday in the House relating to the powers that have been vested in the royal commission of inquiry.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that it seems time and time again people in the House are refusing to read the terms of reference that have been given to the Royal Commission of Inquiry. I believe that any fair observer would say the terms of reference that have been given to the Royal Commission are extremely wide.

Why did we set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry? A Royal Commission of Inquiry was set up last July in response to a number of allegations that were made known to the government at that time. Prior to that the Leader of the Opposition was pressing for a royal commission. He then asks the following question during this debate: by whom were these acts committed and at whose direction? I would venture to suggest that the basic purpose of the Royal Commission of Inquiry is to get at the bottom of exactly who committed the acts and at whose direction. I think if you look at the terms of reference—

Mr. Speaker, an hon. member on the other side says change the terms of reference. If you look at the terms of reference—

Mr. Clark: We have.

Mr. Fox: If you have, I suggest you re-read them. They are extremely wide. I should like to make one point very clear once again, a point that has been made time and time again in the course of debate in the House, that is, that the chairman and members of that commission have all the powers required under the terms of reference to look at an illegal act, if there is one, and to follow the nexus all the way up to wherever it leads.

I see that the Leader of the Opposition is nodding, and I trust he is nodding in agreement. He is nodding in disagreement. I wish he would point out to me—I believe I have read the terms of reference in as impartial a manner as I possibly can and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition has done the same thing. I am personally convinced that the Commission of Inquiry has all the powers necessary to do that. And I would suggest that if it does not, if the Leader of the Opposition feels that it does not, I would imagine that the chairman of the commission would also have that feeling and would come back to us and say, "We really feel that you just have not gone as far as you wanted to go. We need additional powers to be able