

**Mr. Oberle:** The minister has not said if that particular section will apply to evidence which the commission may request of a minister of the Crown or even the Prime Minister.

If the allegations or information I have made known privately to the Solicitor General are without foundation and have nothing to do with the setting up of the commission inquiry, will he now give me permission, publicly, to divulge that same information to the press, since, according to what he says, it is without foundation?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, two different considerations are involved.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** One is the truth.

**Mr. Oberle:** Yes, or no.

**Mr. Fox:** We are talking about the foundation for the conduct of the inquiry. I hope the hon. member agrees that most of the information he relayed to me related to police forces not under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

**Mr. Oberle:** It related to the RCMP, your office, and officers in your office. Answer yes or no.

**Mr. Fox:** Obviously the hon. member feels strongly about the matter. The matter is being examined impartially and independently. Surely the hon. member, a member of the Progressive Conservative party, does not object to the Ontario Attorney General, for whom I have the greatest respect as an attorney general, looking into the matter. As for the other part of the question, I think I answered it fully in my previous response. I would not intend to file any such affidavit, but I would have to consider the matter. I suppose if the commission wants to look into matters which have nothing to do with its terms of reference, I would need to consider the matter.

**Mr. Oberle:** That is right. You would cover it up.

**Mr. Fox:** Further, I would seek the advice of the law officers of the Crown on how I should conduct myself in the circumstances and I shall answer in the House of Commons, as usual, for any actions I may take.

**Mr. Oberle:** I have finished playing ball with you.

**Mr. Fox:** The Federal Court Act gives me certain powers. And it is not for me to say parliament was wrong in giving me those powers.

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). Let me preface it by saying I have read the terms of reference carefully and they seem narrow and restrictive. Would it not be in the minister's own interest to include in the terms of reference provisions which would allow the commission to inquire into the relationship between the Solicitor General and the RCMP, particularly as it relates to accountability and responsibility? Surely that is germane to this whole question. I ask the minister, in light of the exchanges which have taken place in

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the House today—and I commend him on his manner of handling himself—if it would not be in his own best interest to have that matter spelled out in the terms of reference, so that the commission can look into that particular relationship and determine if it can be improved?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, no. I appreciate the hon. member's advice, but from my reading of the terms of reference I cannot share his opinion that they are restrictive. The first part would allow the commission to conduct such investigations as, in the opinion of the commissioners, are necessary. I cannot think of broader language. Part (b) would give the commission power to report facts relating to any investigative action or activity, and so on. That language is also broad in the terms of reference. I could have phrased the terms of reference in such a way as to restrict them solely to the APLQ matter, the Praxis affair, or to some of the other matters other hon. members raised. I felt it would be better to hold a more open, wider inquiry. I wanted to let the Canadian public know that this commission has all the powers necessary to look into all the allegations of wrongdoing on the part of the force. I want to re-establish, in that way, the previous excellent reputation of the force, a reputation it still deserves, and will continue to deserve.

**Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview):** Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that only recently he had obtained information concerning incidents of alleged wrongdoing on the part of RCMP officers. On the basis of that information, apparently, he set up the commission of inquiry. How many incidents of alleged wrongdoing were brought to the minister's attention? More important than that, have any people been suspended as a result of the allegations of illegal action, and have any been charged?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, between June 17, I believe, and the present, a number of allegations have come forward. Consequently the deputy Solicitor General has had but a short time to examine these allegations. I asked him to do it. I also asked the Commissioner of the RCMP to look into the matter. This has been done as quickly and humanely as possible, in the circumstances. Certain new facts came to light in the past couple of weeks, and it takes a certain length of time to determine if there is any basis to some allegations. I cannot say that we have hard evidence at present as to who committed what acts. We felt that the best way to deal with the matter was to set up an independent commission, which would examine the facts and so avoid the sort of criticism the hon. member's leader levelled at the government concerning the RCMP in-house investigation of 1976.

● (1650)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I will see the hon. member for a supplementary question, and conclude questioning with the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty), the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin), and the hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Jones).

**Mr. Gilbert:** Will the minister direct his attention to the number of incidents that were referred to him? Is it right to