

attorneys general are concerned, I indicated, along with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, during my conference with the attorneys general last June, that we are ready to explore methods and means to have greater co-operation among all attorneys general because we think it is extremely important in the fight against crime in this country which is a matter of interest to all Canadian citizens.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

PURPOSE OF OBTAINING LISTS OF PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS MEMBERS—POSSIBILITY INFORMATION GIVEN TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister and it is a follow-up of the general import of the question from my colleague, the hon. member for Egmont. It relates to the exchange of information. Certainly the raid or the break-in, whatever the Solicitor General wants to call it, of the two premises, that is the APLQ premises and the printing plant utilized by the PQ in the province of Quebec, had for its purpose, even though there was not a scintilla of evidence of any crime having been committed, to obtain lists, in one case a subscription list and in the other case a membership list. My question to the chief lieutenant of the Prime Minister in the province of Quebec, the temporary head of the government here today, the Acting Prime Minister, is this: The Minister of State for Urban Affairs in the House late last spring indicated that as the chief political organizer for the Liberal party in Quebec he had in his possession a list of all known separatist sympathizers in the province of Quebec. Is there any connection between these lists that the security services were after and the list now in the possession of one of the ministers from the province of Quebec? What was the purpose in getting those lists as far as the security service was concerned?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): The answer is no.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Why?

An hon. Member: Answer it.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I gave a clear answer, Mr. Speaker. It is no.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: When my colleague, the Minister of State for Urban Affairs, referred to a list of people who belong to the Parti Québécois, let me say that I know a lot of them in my riding and anyway I am not worried about the next election.

An hon. Member: Why don't you worry about the country?

Oral Questions

Mr. Lawrence: I am glad the Acting Prime Minister can be that definite and that blunt in his answer. Perhaps today he will not be able to give me that assurance, but I wonder if he would make a very thorough check so that he could assure the House and the public tomorrow that no information gathered by the security services of the RCMP or any other security service of this government has in any way been passed through, passed over or given to any other political groups in this country as distinct from governmental groups either at the provincial or the federal level.

Mr. Chrétien: If I can make myself clearer, I will reply in French. La réponse est non.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I want an assurance—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

KNOWLEDGE OF MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER OF SCOPE OF SECURITY OPERATIONS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. When the MacKenzie report was tabled in the House in 1969, I made a statement with, I think, the full approval of the House, that it would be completely unacceptable for the House to have the security operations of this country put beyond the knowledge of the Prime Minister or the responsible minister of the government. Is it the position of the Solicitor General and of the government of this country today that the scope, not to mention the methods, of some of the security operations conducted in this country in the intervening years were beyond the knowledge of the supposedly responsible minister and the Prime Minister?

• (1502)

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned it is quite clear that during the course of my experience as Solicitor General the RCMP security service was already operating under a very clear mandate which was given to it by the government in 1975. It was also made very clear to the security service and the commissioner of the force that all operations of the security service were to be carried out in full compliance with the law. The law, of course, has been amended since the period in question, and a number of new safeguards which I enumerated last night—eight or nine of them—have been introduced by the government to ensure greater accountability and greater control of the security service of this country.

Mr. Stanfield: I wish the Solicitor General or the acting Prime Minister would give me a simple answer to a very simple question. I did not ask the Solicitor General whether security operations have been conducted within the law. I asked him whether it was the position of the government that the scope of the operations—for example, surveillance of the