

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Central Nova.

ROLE PLAYED BY INSPECTOR BANNING IN SECURITY PLANNING GROUP

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. Further to a conversation we had this morning I would like to ask him if he can now give the House any further information on the role played by the police and security planning and analysis branch with reference to any duties or activity involving Inspector Pat Banning. I understand this man was a career RCMP officer seconded to this group.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for getting in touch with me this morning. He asked me a specific question concerning superintendent Banning. I have made inquiries. Mr. Banning served within the police and security group from August, 1971 to the month of June, 1973. He occupied the position of director of security policy, which was exclusively involved with the question of policy formulation within that group during that period of time.

AVAILABILITY OF INCOME TAX INFORMATION TO SECURITY PLANNING GROUP

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his answer, and I would like to ask him a related question. As far as the principle of income tax confidentiality is concerned, a matter raised by the right hon. member for Prince Albert on October 26, can the Solicitor General indicate whether any police security services of government have in fact had a liaison with the Department of National Revenue—the information from which may be found, I am informed, in the “L” section files of the RCMP—so that this information has been in fact available to the security services from the Department of National Revenue for some period of time, in addition to the agreement which was referred to in this House not so long ago between the Department of National Revenue and the RCMP?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I have not been able to come across any indications of such a practice up to this moment. As I indicated in the House on Thursday, I asked the RCMP to provide complete briefs on all their investigative practices and procedures so that they may be brought to the attention of the royal commission of inquiry looking into the RCMP.

Oral Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE

ALLEGATION ARMED FORCES CONDUCTED DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. Would the minister confirm that the army's intelligence branch has maintained a domestic service or a domestic operation which has been involved in the monitoring of Canadian trade unions? Related to that, would he confirm that the reports which were allegedly prepared were then submitted to the cabinet?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there is no activity on the part of the security intelligence unit of the Department of National Defence which does any surveillance on trade unions at all. We have no agents or undercover people involved in such activity. We monitor a number of people and organizations across the country, and if indeed we are asked, we have a responsibility to respond to requests for aid by civil authorities, but we do not as a practice carry on any infiltration or monitoring of such organizations.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister's answer with care, just as I am sure he chose his words with care, but I would like to ask him specifically with regard to the allegations which were made in a number of newspapers and in other forms of media in the past 48 hours whether there has been a branch of the armed services which has studied the financial operations of one or more trade unions in Canada, which has prepared comments on the likelihood of success in internal trade union elections and which has commented in any detailed way on the internal performance of one or more trade unions? Has there been any branch of the armed services involved in that kind of surveillance and submitting that kind of report?

Mr. Danson: Mr. Speaker, there are files on various organizations in the country which are kept. There is monitoring in that sense. Perhaps I was incorrect in using that word before. This applies to some political groups, to some business groups and to individuals across the country. We have a responsibility to respond to the attorneys general of the provinces in the event they need the assistance of the armed forces. The chief of the defence staff has the obligation to respond. The level of response and the nature thereof is a matter of his judgment, so he must have information available to him which will give him an indication of the type of response he should provide.

POSSIBILITY ARMED FORCES MONITORED INTERNAL OPERATIONS OF UNIONS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the minister seemed to be much more forthcoming in his response the other day outside the House when he heard about these allegations. He just said in the second answer if I heard him correctly that there was indeed the monitoring of certain organizations, including business organizations. I thought his first answer denied that and implied they might be looking at the observance of certain individuals. I should like to ask him