

## Supply—Justice

tempted to ask the hon. member for Timiskaming what commissioner it was, and what the details were that were given but I was afraid he might say that I was persecuting him or following up an unfair investigation. I should be very surprised indeed if any commissioner of the R.C.M.P. gave all the information with which the hon. gentleman has regaled the house. I just want to say that I do not for a moment intend to try to follow all the implications of what the hon. gentleman said because the very vehemence and absurdity gave their own answer. I do not, for a moment, accept the implication that a particular member of parliament is picked out, if any members of parliament are picked out, and investigated, whereas those favourable to the government or the official opposition are not. I have indicated in my statement to which I have already referred on July 8, 1958, page 2047, how these files are started. Files are started in that way only, whether the subject of the file is a member of parliament or not a member of parliament.

**Mr. Winch:** I am going to say a word about these files. I am going to challenge the Minister of Justice right now to tell the members of this house whether the R.C.M.P. do keep track of any members of parliament, in what they do and in what they say?

**Mr. Fulton:** I am sorry. I did not want to take the time of the committee, but apparently I shall have to read the answer I gave on an earlier occasion. The question was this:

Does the R.C.M.P. maintain any files or dossiers on members of parliament? If so, upon which members of the present parliament are such files or dossiers maintained?

The answer is recorded on page 2047 of *Hansard* for July 8, 1958 as follows:

All Royal Canadian Mounted Police files on individuals are confidential and many are secret. One of the primary duties of all those responsible for such files is to respect and preserve the confidential or secret nature of their contents.

It will be appreciated also that a large number of such files are started by reports, statements or knowledge of activities coming to the attention of responsible members of the police which they are bound to investigate in the course of their duties. The follow-up on such reports in many cases reveals no necessity for further action, yet there is still a file. This means that many files will be in existence under the names of individuals against whom there is nothing of a substantial, let alone a criminal, nature.

It will therefore be generally agreed that it would be grossly unfair to any such individual to have it revealed or even suspected that there exists a police file under his name, yet there may be many ways in which such a suspicion could be raised. One of the surest ways of laying the foundation for the raising of suspicion would be to isolate a group of individuals, such as members of parliament, start answering questions as to whether there are any files on any of them and

then refuse—as would have to be done—to go any further when questioned as to the existence or non-existence of a file on a specific member or members of such group. But this is exactly the door which would be opened by an answer to this question.

Not only would this lead to the possibility of prejudice to an innocent individual, but if there were in fact with respect to any one or more members of such group a file or files which contained information serious enough to warrant further investigation, the success of the investigation and possibly the security of the state, might be seriously prejudiced by giving any information whatsoever.

It therefore follows that, both in order to protect innocent individuals on whom there may be files and to preserve the interests of the state, the answer must be that it is considered to be contrary to the public interest to give a specific answer to this question.

**Mr. Winch:** All I can say is this: I have no objection whatever, and you can produce my file any time you like. As a matter of fact, I should like to see exactly what is in it. But beyond that, I do want to say that, if you are continuing your investigation under your gestapo in the R.C.M.P.—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Winch:** —I do not mean “your” in a personal sense because I have—

**Mr. Fulton:** On reflection I do not think the hon. member would want to apply that language to our present people. I do not think he would really want to use that word in respect to the force.

**Mr. Winch:** If you have in any police force of a nation a secret force investigating individuals at all times, including active, honest and true patriots in trade unions and in parliament, then I say that is a gestapo.

**Mr. Johnson:** Why don't you say N.K.V.D.?

**Mr. Winch:** However, if you do not like the word “gestapo” I will withdraw it and I will say that I object to the principle in a democracy of a secret force making secret investigations which cannot be known to the individual at any time and as a result of which he can be condemned and damned without himself knowing anything about it or being able to answer any of the charges.

What I rose to say was this, Mr. Chairman. As far as I am concerned, I appreciate the remarks of the Minister of Justice that he himself in no way questions my own democratic attitude, my own loyalty or my own patriotism. What I want to say is this. If the R.C.M.P. wants to carry on spending the taxpayers' money, it is going to be a waste of it because I never intend to change my loyalty and patriotism and I think the taxpayers' money can be better spent in other directions.