

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 17, 1971

The House met at 11 a.m.

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMISSION

Mr. Speaker: I have the pleasure of announcing the presence in the Speaker's gallery of a very distinguished visitor, His Excellency Signor Franco Maria Malfatti, President of the European Community Commission. On behalf of hon. members I heartily welcome President Malfatti and express the wish, on behalf of each and everyone of my colleagues in the House, that his visit and that of his colleagues to our capital may be both fruitful and pleasant.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

STATEMENT BY SOLICITOR GENERAL ON USE OF INFORMERS

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I said in the House on Thursday, September 9, that I would make a statement concerning the use of informants by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with particular reference to the serious allegations made by Mr. Robert W. Eadie, Jr. formerly of Cornwall, Ontario, on a television broadcast on September 8.

I have now received a report from the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and wish to inform the House in the first instance, of the policy in effect in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police regarding the use of juvenile informants and then to speak of the allegations made by Mr. Eadie Jr.

I am informed by the Commissioner of the RCMP that for decades it has been the general policy of the Force that police business involving juveniles should be conducted with great care and with the full knowledge and consent of the parents or guardian. Police officers are instructed that the approaches to juveniles must be direct and honest; a show of force or harshness or anything that suggests threats must be avoided. If it is necessary to interrogate juveniles, every effort is made for at least one parent or the school principal or teacher to be present.

It has been general practice within the RCMP that when a juvenile volunteers information, the police investigator obtains as much information as possible during the initial contact. If the same juvenile returns with information a second or third time, then the investigator notifies the

informant's parents or guardian and obtains their consent before making further use of the juvenile as an informant.

It has not been general practice for juvenile informants to be paid for information given at the first contact though, if this information has led to an arrest or a seizure of drugs for example, then casual payments have been made after the first contact. Juvenile informants have been paid on a casual basis for information provided, which has been verified and has produced effective results. But I would like to make it clear that juvenile informants have not been carried on a regular payroll, either weekly, monthly or annually.

I am informed by the Commissioner of the RCMP that as of August 24, 1971, only six juvenile informants reporting to the RCMP were receiving payments for information on a casual basis. On August 12, 1971, a formal instruction was issued by the RCMP headquarters under the title Interim Instruction 134. This instruction was amended shortly thereafter and the amendment was distributed to all divisions on August 24, 1971. With regard to juvenile informants, the amended instruction 134 reads as follows:

"When a juvenile volunteers information, the investigator should accept whatever information is available during the initial contact. If the services of the juvenile are to be used any time after the initial contact, the investigator must first obtain the consent of the juvenile's parents or guardian.

A juvenile shall not be: (a) assigned an informant's number or (b) paid money under any circumstances.

Juveniles shall not be used to purchase drugs."

I am sure hon. members will agree that the practice of paying juveniles for information given by them to the police is repugnant. Furthermore, this practice did not add appreciably to the efficiency of police operations. Accordingly the instruction was amended on August 24 to ensure that juveniles who provide the RCMP with useful information will no longer be paid money under any circumstances.

• (11:10 a.m.)

[English]

I wish now to deal with allegations that I have been misled by the RCMP and that I misled the public when I stated on a television program in August that the RCMP "would not have a young person as informant on any payroll".

A young person within this context is a juvenile as defined under the Juvenile Delinquency Act. As hon. members know, provincial Attorneys General are primarily responsible for enforcing the Criminal Code. For this reason the definition of the age of a juvenile pursuant to the Juvenile Delinquents Act is that which applies in so far as RCMP operations are concerned. In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Alberta—Alberta for boys only—a juvenile is one who is under the age of 16. In