

My question to the Solicitor General about this is, if the Prime Minister was referring, and it is not clear from the context, to the time of the break-in, that seems to imply that something ought to have been done in terms of public revelation of the fact that it was done. That is one interpretation. The only other interpretation is that he was referring to the time he got the information, which was late last week, in which case he was saying we found then they were doing something illegal and we told them to stop. What did he find out late last week that they were still doing that he told them to stop?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I believe one would have to ask the Prime Minister what he had in mind when he made the statement. What I gather is that the statement referred to two different things, first the question of general surveillance of political parties. The position of the government has always been clear. No democratic political party of any stripe can be, should be or ought to be the object of systematic surveillance by the RCMP. That has been made clear time and time again in this House by the Prime Minister. We stated that in this House in 1976.

As to the other part of the question, where I think some confusion arises, the Prime Minister is obviously referring to the fact that this question concerning the computer tapes on which the lists of members of the Parti Québécois were included was brought to his attention at the end of last week or at the beginning of last week. I think it is as simple as that and the confusion once again rests in the mind of the reader.

**Mr. Broadbent:** We will see about that when the Prime Minister comes back to the House.

**An hon. Member:** Ask him.

**Mr. Broadbent:** If he were around, I would ask him. With reference to something else, the Prime Minister said with what I can only regard as calculated ambiguity in this case, and he is quoted in the press on the week-end, that when he found out that the surveillance was taking place, whether in 1974 or 1975 and he was not sure which, with reference to the compilation of the lists of the PQ membership that "maybe they", with reference to the RCMP "did tell me" about it at that time. Is it credible to the Solicitor General that a normally intelligent man back in 1974 or 1975, when informed of surveillance, when presumably he is not sure, that he learned about a list being in the hands of the RCMP about future membership, that he would not have asked the RCMP if they had acted by peaceful and legal means or by illegal means.

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear the Prime Minister answered these questions in detail during the course of his conference. He stated that he did receive information from time to time from the RCMP security service, information which is gathered in the normal course of his duties and that in most cases the question as to where the information came from was not asked in view of the fact the RCMP always assured him the information came from reliable sources.

### *Oral Questions*

#### SURVEILLANCE OF PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS—ACTION BY PRIME MINISTER

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** The Prime Minister revealed a sort of disarming naivety on Friday when he said that this matter was brought to his attention in 1974 and 1975 and he was scandalized that they were observing a democratically constituted party. Would the Solicitor General not consider it a responsibility of the Prime Minister or indeed any minister that if he were scandalized by surveillance of a democratically constituted party, that he would have had the common sense and/or moral responsibility to go beyond that, being scandalized to find out if they were actually doing it democratically?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** When the Prime Minister found out that that was the case, his attitude was the proper one. It is the same one I would have today, to tell the security that any such surveillance is not proper and must cease immediately.

#### [Translation]

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH FLQ IN 1970

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Solicitor General. The sensational revelations he made last week have of course spread consternation even among the staunchest supporters of this government. Mr. Speaker, since the revelations made seem to have been brought out by the Keable Commission as a result of the Quebec government's action regarding the search in the offices of the Agence de presse libre du Québec, could the minister tell the House whether he at last will fully disclose the illegal activities by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, beginning with its infiltration in the ranks of the FLQ in 1970?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, our decision to set up a royal commission of inquiry in July was precisely to clear up the operations of the RCMP in an open, accurate and unequivocal way.

It was our opinion, Mr. Speaker—and it might not be shared by our colleague—that the best way to do it was to proceed within a judicial framework with a judge and procedures, where people can be examined and cross-examined under oath and have every opportunity to make their case to explain their acts to the court and to the population of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this way of proceeding is much more preferable than the one suggested by the hon. member. Besides, since he is so impressed by the activities of the Parti Québécois government in Quebec, I would remind him that this same government which makes such a deep impression on him is proceeding in the same way.

**Mr. Matte:** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Quebec government may impress me, but the minister and the government impress us indeed greatly when we are faced with such disclosures. The minister can therefore dispense with