

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

PROPOSAL THAT ALL SECURITY DECISIONS BE MADE BY
COMMISSIONER—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Ken Hurlburt (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In light of the fact that all Canadians have more faith in the RCMP than they do in the Prime Minister and this government—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hurlburt: —I move, seconded by the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan):

That immediate action be taken to have all security decisions made by the commissioner of the RCMP until after the next federal election, at which time a new prime minister will take office in the name of Joe Clark.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SOVIET MINISTER OF FISH
INDUSTRY, MR. A. A. ISHKOV

Mr. Speaker: Before beginning the oral question period, I know that all hon. members will want to join with me in signalling the presence in our gallery of a very distinguished visitor, Mr. A. A. Ishkov, the Minister of the Fish Industry of the U.S.S.R.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY

INQUIRY WHETHER SECURITY PLANNING GROUP HAS
OPERATIONAL ROLE

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General and it concerns the security planning and analysis group. As the minister will recall, when that group was originally announced by his predecessor twice removed, the minister made it clear at that time—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): All of them should have been removed.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Clark: —that the functions of that group would be simply to analyse information and advise the minister. He went on to say: “The group has no operational duties”. Will the Solicitor General tell the House whether the security planning and analysis group now carries out operational duties, or is involved in any way in the carrying out of the operations for anyone else?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it has been explained time and time again, and as recently as last April or May, when members of that organization appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in order to explain their estimates. The question was put a number of times by the hon. member for Yukon and the answer was given at that time. There has been no change. That group does not have any operational responsibilities.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, in order to understand what the Solicitor General is saying, is he saying that this group is not involved in any way whatsoever with the operational activities of any other branch or agency of the government of Canada?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, obviously the group receives information from other agencies which have operational capabilities, in particular from the RCMP security services for the purposes of analysis.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General has now said that this group receives information from operational groups. Is it involved in giving instructions or directions, which would be operational, to any other agency of the government of Canada, including the security services?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I have examined the matter in detail with the members of that group, and it is quite clear they are not involved in operations. They are on the receiving end of the information gathered by other agencies.

POSSIBILITY MINISTER MISLED BY SECURITY PLANNING GROUP

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the function of that group, as we understand it from the minister and the terms of reference, has been an advisory role to keep the minister advised. Frequently in this House the minister has, to his own discomfort, admitted that he has been badly briefed presumably by the security and analysis group. Will he tell the House whether the group had information which it did not pass along to him resulting in his not knowing what he should have known, or did they not have that information and were they consequently not performing their functions effectively?

● (1417)

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I ever indicated that I had been misled by that group. If the hon. member wishes to raise specific instances, I would be pleased to reply to him.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker—