

I wish to know what the Minister plans to do in order to ensure that his Department, where it is still needed, begins to serve Indian people instead of always looking after itself?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I wish to read briefly from the report, "although the region satisfactorily complies with most parliamentary and government policies and requirements where it—" meaning the Department, "delivers services directly to Indians, it fails to fully comply with these policies and requirements where administrative responsibilities have been devolved to Indian bands, tribal councils or their representatives".

We are being criticized for transferring resources and funds to Indian Governments to allow them to administer those funds. The Hon. Member is suggesting that the Department should be more rigid, more paternalistic—

Mr. Penner: You know better than that.

Mr. McKnight:—more demanding of Indian Governments. We will comply, but we will not stifle the ability of Indian people to govern themselves with the funds provided.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

AIR-INDIA CRASH—INFORMER'S ALLEGATIONS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General.

Last week we learned in the House that CSIS negligence and failure to inform their political masters may well have led to the possible death of a visiting cabinet Minister.

Today we learned that the RCMP may have been negligent in failing to inform those who were responsible for the possible attack on Air-India which led to the deaths of 329 people.

Does the Minister agree that Paul Besso did alert the RCMP to the possibility, in general terms, of an attack on Air-India, several days before that attack? I am not talking here about the specific flight or date, but if the Minister accepts that, how can he possibly explain the failure of those responsible to ensure the safety of those 329 passengers?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, naturally I will attempt to answer the question. Again let me repeat what was stated by the Hon. Minister of Transport in June of 1985: "I should point out to the House that there was no indication that there was a specific threat to Flight 182".

I am aware of the story to which the Hon. Member refers.

Mr. de Corneille: Resign!

Oral Questions

Mr. Kelleher: I am aware of the statements he is alleged to have made. I have fully reinvestigated the matter—

Mr. Broadbent: Have you looked at the evidence? You haven't even looked at the evidence.

Mr. de Corneille: Resign!

Mr. Kelleher: I have fully reinvestigated the matter this morning.

Mr. Rodriguez: Thanks, Sherlock.

Mr. Kelleher: I have fully investigated the matter again this morning. I have fully discussed it with the Commissioner of the RCMP who has gone through the files again, and discussed it with his people.

Mr. Riis: Sounds like a cover-up, Jim.

Mr. Kelleher: The statement that was made in June of 1985 was true then, and it's still true now notwithstanding the story that has appeared.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, this Minister has to be the most appalling example of incompetence that this House has seen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I know the Hon. Member has strong views, but I know that the Hon. Member would wish to use a preamble to set the facts upon which he bases his question. The Hon. Member will put his question.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER EXAMINE DOCUMENTATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister a very straightforward question.

In view of the serious allegations by Paul Besso suggesting that he informed the RCMP several days ahead of time of the possibility, in general terms, of an attack on an Air-India flight, I wish to ask the Minister why has he not personally reviewed the documentation which Besso turned over to the RCMP? Why has the Minister not personally reviewed that documentation, listened to the wire-taps himself, and examined this very serious allegation? Why is the Minister failing to accept his responsibility, and in the process casting a shadow over the RCMP? Why will the Minister not act?

Mr. Jelinek: Don't you trust the RCMP?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): I don't think it should be the obligation of the Solicitor General to start involving himself personally in investigations and reading all of the evidence, because the first thing that I would then hear from the Hon. Member is of the political interference by the Solicitor General.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!