

Minister and the then solicitor general was that there was an investigation and there was nothing to be concerned about.

Is it not important, in terms of the public knowledge of this event, to know whether there was a cover-up, to use the going word, whether the government of the day was misleading us or whether the RCMP was misleading the government at that time? Surely that is a very basic question that in one sense goes to the root of the whole problem and this whole inquiry, and leaves open the possibility of getting answers rather than making it mandatory.

● (1630)

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of instances that have been brought to the attention of the House and a number of instances, as I indicated in my statement, that have been brought to my attention since I made my statement in the House on June 17. It is my firm belief that the terms of reference not only allow the commission of inquiry to look at those cases which have become public but some which are not public at the moment because they have been brought to my personal attention and have been investigated. It would also allow them to look at other possible cases coming up or that they may uncover during the course of their investigation. The powers they have would enable them to look at the APLQ affair from beginning to end to see whether, as the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) suggested, there was a criminal cover-up at any level. That is, of course, one of the things that the commissioners will be looking at during the course of the inquiry.

Perhaps I should read *Hansard* again, but my understanding of the whole matter is that assurances were given to the House, on the basis of information received by the force, that the APLQ affair was an exceptional and isolated incident. Of course I stand by those statements. It is only post-June 17, post the time that I made a statement in the House—

**Mr. Broadbent:** When did you find out?

**Mr. Fox:** —that specific allegations were brought to my attention. As I stated here, it is not enough simply to have allegations. I asked the Deputy Solicitor General of Canada and the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Law, to interview the people who had made the allegations and to look further into the allegations to see if there was any semblance of fact there. I also requested that the commissioner of the RCMP look into them to see whether on his side there was any basis in fact. It was only when I received reports to the effect that there apparently may be some basis in fact—

**Mr. Broadbent:** When did you find out?

**Mr. Fox:** —that this was brought—

**Mr. Speaker:** A supplementary, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence).

**Mr. Allen Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question relates to the very restrictive terms of reference. I can well understand why the minister was ashamed to read them in the House. Having had

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a hand in drafting terms of reference I can assure the House that they are extremely restrictive.

Based on the logicity of the terms of reference, wherein the inquiry has been called because of certain allegations, the main allegation in this House involves the former solicitor general. This means that inextricably interwoven in this whole matter was the knowledge of serious and, as it turns out, genuine, allegations of police intervention in criminal activities—knowledge which was sent to the minister. In other words, there was ministerial knowledge of serious allegations. That was the basis of most of the allegations that came certainly from this party, within this House. Bearing that in mind, is it not rather strange that there is absolutely no term of reference to permit the commissioners to inquire into the relationship not only of the minister but also of his staff, with the RCMP?

I do not want the minister to make the same error that the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) made when he confused political responsibility with political control. We are talking about political responsibility here. Why was there not a term of reference inquiring into the relationship between the political head and the operational head of the RCMP?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, I think one of the premises on which the hon. member's question is put is that someone was aware of potential or alleged criminal activity. I think it is quite clear, and my statement bears it out, that as soon as any matter concerning alleged criminal activity was brought to my attention or to the attention of any Solicitor General, the necessary steps were taken to investigate it.

The establishment of the royal commission is a clear indication of the government's stand that the police must act within the limits of the law. Through the top management of the force, the police completely subscribe to that proposition. The whole purpose of the royal commission cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, ever be conceived as a cover-up operation. If it were it would be a poor way of handling the matter. The fact is quite the opposite. The purpose is to give to the commission of inquiry all the latitude and power it needs to look into every allegation, founded or unfounded, whether brought forward in a responsible or irresponsible manner, and to get to the bottom of the matter. Surely that is the purpose of the royal commission.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I have a final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Back in 1973 the existing system failed. Serious and genuine allegations of criminal activity were made to the minister, and he bungled it. It may not have been his fault but he bungled it one way or another. The system failed. Under these terms of reference the commissioners cannot inquire into that relationship. I suggest to the minister that is a whitewash term of reference. Why are the commissioners not asked to inquire into that relationship?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. member looks at the terms of reference he will find that the commission has full