

Adjournment Debate

expires on December 31, 1975. Now the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) wants to renegotiate that contract. He wants to make municipalities pay 85 per cent of the entire cost of maintaining the RCMP forces in any given municipality in British Columbia.

Think what that means for a municipality like Surrey-White Rock. Here is a municipality which has inherited all of the problems of racial tension as a result of federal immigration policies. It has inherited the problems of congested housing, again the result of inadequate federal housing policies. It is inheriting drug trafficking problems because of the shortcomings within the judicial system, and because of the half-hearted support given the police forces by the federal government. In total, the local governments have a gun held to their heads. On the one hand they have the problems that face them for which there is no immediate solution, and on the other hand they are not being given the tools to do the job. And in the future the government wants to restrict their efforts even further. The local governments have no bargaining power but are faced with mounting problems issuing from the policies or non-policies of the federal government.

I would be the first to admit there is a need for fiscal restraint by the government. There are many places where we can be critical of federal government spending; there are many "give away" programs that are ought to be eliminated; there are many people who have destroyed their own sense of the work ethic and who are being given handouts by the federal government. There are hundreds of ways in which we can exercise fiscal restraint.

As long as I have letters from my constituents telling me that they are afraid to go out at night I will do my best to press the government not to exercise fiscal restraint in this area. I believe that members of the RCMP are doing yeoman's duty working against all odds, and ought not to be the victims of this kind of disservice. I beg the Solicitor General to reconsider his plan to be tight fisted in his forthcoming policy, and to give the RCMP forces in British Columbia the kind of support they deserve and sorely need.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, on July 9 the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Friesen) asked me how I could justify supporting a cabinet guideline to hold expenditures for law enforcement

establishments at 6 per cent. I answered that I was not sure that there was such a guideline for our department, but I did say that there would be certain cuts with respect to the RCMP and the penitentiary service but that they would be kept to a minimum in the province of British Columbia.

I should now like to give further answer to the hon. member.

In 1975-76 the RCMP was granted 1,009 additional man-years, for an increase of approximately 6 per cent over the previous year. The province of British Columbia was granted 244 of those additional man-years for 1975-76, for an increase of 7.2 per cent, which was a greater increase than that for the RCMP nationally during that year.

The recent cutback of 1 per cent on the man-years establishment will affect the RCMP nationally with a cut of 178 man-years to be implemented over a period of 1½ years. This will mean that the planned increase for 1975-76 for the RCMP will be reduced to approximately 5 per cent.

I want to emphasize to the hon. member, however, that any such reductions will be applied to low priority tasks for the RCMP and low priority regions. In this respect the RCMP consider British Columbia a very high priority region. As I mentioned, the increase in man-years originally allocated for British Columbia in 1975-76 was higher than the national average. I should point out that the shortage of police in British Columbia in 1975 is in a great measure due to the attitude of the former Socred government which, year after year, cut back on the suggested manpower for the RCMP in British Columbia for provincial policing. As a result, the new provincial government and the federal government are attempting to do a lot of catching up.

In conclusion let me say that some of these matters are now being reviewed as part of our work to provide a more effective crime prevention program for the autumn. I want to assure the House that we will do everything possible to provide additional protection for the public against crime, while respecting the government's general program for restraint in lower priority tasks and areas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 o'clock a.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.