

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to accept the preamble to that question. May I say that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—and here I speak on behalf of the Solicitor General—have received copies of a number of documents from the Montreal city police relating to the activities of the Company of Young Canadians in Quebec.

I think it might interest the House to know that these documents were received on several dates. Beginning on October 29, documents were received from time to time through to November 20. On November 21 the Montreal police turned over some more documents. On November 24 two additional series of documents were received, and another series on November 20, 21 and 25. I understand that other documents were submitted, in the ordinary course of the exercise of co-operative police measures by the federal, provincial and municipal police forces, as late as last night.

The Government will give careful consideration to this material in determining what course of action it should pursue in respect of the Company of Young Canadians. I want to say as well that while the federal government is responsible for deciding what action to take in respect of the management and the future of the Company of Young Canadians—and it will undoubtedly want to wait for the report of the parliamentary committee—any question of instituting legal proceedings regarding alleged violations of the Criminal Code is, under the heading of the administration of justice, a provincial responsibility.

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Justice.

Since he has just stated that his department had from time to time received documents from the R.C.M.P., I would like to know whether they had been requested by his department and also whether they were studied while the parliamentary committee was carrying on its inquiry.

[English]

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the law officers of the Crown have received these documents from the RCMP and we are studying them.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister and it is supplementary

[Mr. Fortin.]

to the question asked by my leader. After this matter came to your attention, perhaps last spring, as you stated, did you ask the Solicitor General—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member kindly direct his question through the Chair.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether, after this matter came to his attention, perhaps last spring, as he said, he requested the Solicitor General to ask the RCMP to make a report? If he cannot answer that today, since this is not a day for the Solicitor General to be in the House will he undertake to have the minister make a statement or perhaps make a statement himself tomorrow regarding what action, if any, was taken after this matter came to his notice?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think I can answer this question from memory. Essentially what I did ask then of Mr. Saulnier was that he help us by showing us some proof of his suspicions or allegations, and that has been our position all along. Since then we have had documents turned over to us by him and we have looked at them with all the dispatch mentioned by the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Horner: Since the 29th of October.

Mr. Trudeau: What is your problem?

An hon. Member: It's your problem.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice and is really seeking clarification. Did I understand the minister to say that he has received reports from the Montreal police on CYC activity, and do I also understand he has indicated that the government initiated independent investigations by the RCMP as a result of receiving reports on this matter?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): No, sir. What I said was that the RCMP, in the ordinary course of co-operative police work, received some of the documents that were seized. We are not at all sure we have received the complete set of documents. We did receive documents that were purported to have been seized by the Montreal city police. The documents were analysed by the RCMP and were submitted to the law officers of the Crown in the Department of Justice for the same purpose.