

Oral Questions

responsibility the Solicitor General has a responsibility to tell this House whether he was lied to by his officials, and, if he was, what disciplinary action he has taken. This is not a matter for a royal commission, it is a matter of a minister discharging his responsibilities as a minister of the Crown.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): What action has he taken? If these actions are not legal then the minister should make a case for their legality. If they are illegal, surely the minister ought first to take action against those responsible and, even more important, ascertain why his officials were not aware of these illegalities. If they were not aware they are incompetent, and if they were aware of them and did not tell the minister they ought to be discharged. What is the minister going to do to assure us that he is a responsible minister?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already indicated quite clearly in response to other questions, and in the course of my statements in June of this year, that I expect the RCMP in all cases to bring to my attention any matters of possible illegalities in a very clear and unequivocal manner. Since the establishment of the royal commission the RCMP has been in the process of preparing briefs on each one of its investigative practices and procedures, in order to bring them to my attention, first of all, and, secondly, to the royal commission of inquiry. I think in that regard they are being very candid, as other experiences indicate when, during the course of the month of September, the Commissioner of the RCMP retracted a statement by a former commissioner because of an error that had been made, an error that was subsequently brought to his attention by a former officer. In that sense, Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear that I expect the RCMP to be very candid with me and to make sure I am aware of any potential illegal problems.

REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF OPERATIONS UNDER CODE NAME
"SOURCE 300"—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Solicitor General who has apparently given the assurance that there are no further illegalities, yet we are getting these coming to light almost on a daily basis. I should like him to comment or tell the House whether he has investigated the latest revelations of alleged illegal activities by the security service, and can he say whether these allegations are substantially correct? Will he indicate to the house what is his information now as to the number of specific operations carried out under the code name "Source 300"?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, when I referred to no other illegalities I was, indeed, referring to my statement in the House on June 17. Since that time, as the hon. member knows, we set up the royal commission of inquiry because we had, subsequent to my statements in the House, information which seemed to have some basis in fact and which seemed to indicate that other possible acts of illegality

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

had been committed by the force. That is, of course, why the royal commission was set up. If we had no indication then of possible further acts of illegality there probably would not be a royal commission set up today.

As to operation 300 to which he referred today, I have had the opportunity of reviewing this matter once again with senior officials of the force, and the allegations, of course, are substantially correct. There is an operation called "Operation 300" which dates back to at least the mid-1950s—

Some hon. Members: Tell us about it.

Mr. Fox: This concerns the entering into premises by the RCMP on the security service side. This matter is being brought to the attention of the royal commission of inquiry. Once again, Mr. Speaker, there is, I believe, a fairly complex legal question involved which is definitely being underplayed by members of the opposition in their constant attempt to try to make a few partisan points out of a matter that is far too important to be left to partisan purposes, when it affects really—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Come clean.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I simply point out that we on this side of the House are becoming more and more concerned about the way in which the Solicitor General is failing in his responsibilities in respect of the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has admitted that the allegations which appeared in the press in respect of "Source 300" are substantially correct, will he tell us whether this information is concurrently being turned over to the appropriate attorneys general for whatever action may be deemed appropriate by the provincial attorneys general involved? Could he also give an assurance to this House that this particular activity, allegedly illegal, has now been terminated and, if so, whether it has been terminated on his orders or, if not, by whom?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, on the question of turning over the Operation 300 files to the provincial attorneys general, as I indicated earlier, this matter goes back to at least the mid-1950s, and probably goes back earlier than that. Our intention at this stage is to turn over to the federal royal commission of inquiry not only the operation 300 files, but briefs on each and every one of the investigative practices of the RCMP.

ALLEGED ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES—SUGGESTION FILES BE TURNED
OVER TO PROVINCIAL ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of protecting the reputation of the RCMP, and not having this drag out day after day and month after month until the royal commission will end some two or three months down the road, will the Solicitor General not agree to turn over