

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In every case on every day I have recognized that the hon. Leader of the Opposition ought to be followed by one of his own members in respect of a supplementary, and very rarely have I interfered. However, today the hon. Leader of the Opposition exposed a subject which relates to interference by the RCMP or others with the mail. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands raised a subject which relates to statements made yesterday by a minister in a question of privilege, which have to do with an apprehended situation some time ago in the province of Quebec. With due respect, I indicated that I would see the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands shortly to expose that subject; but the subject is in no way directly connected as a supplementary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POSSIBILITY FOUR MORE CASES OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITY
REFERRED TO COMMISSION—REFERENCE TO PROVINCIAL
PROSECUTORS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. Would the Solicitor General confirm that either he, officials in his department or members of the RCMP have referred four additional allegations of RCMP wrongdoings. These would be in addition to the APLQ break-in, the barn burning, the dynamite stealing and the breaking into the office of a legal political party. Has he, his officials or the RCMP referred four more allegations of criminal wrongdoings involving the RCMP to the federal royal commission?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the number four comes from. I have given very explicit directions that any complaint or any allegation coming in concerning any possible impropriety by the RCMP, be referred directly to the royal commission of inquiry into the practices and the procedures of the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I will put the question in a different way. Can he tell us how many further allegations he or his officials have referred to the royal commission? Or is he saying that he left instructions with his department to go ahead and do this on its own, and that he does not want to be informed about what is going on? Is he aware of the number that have been referred in addition to those which have already been referred? At the same time, can he tell us if the provincial authorities in the appropriate provinces who are responsible for prosecuting under the Criminal Code have been informed of all such cases?

● (1427)

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, any complaints which have been brought to my attention have been referred in part to the force. They can have a look at them. They have also been referred to the McDonald inquiry. They have not at the same time been automatically referred to the provincial attorneys

general where the alleged events may have occurred. There have been a number of allegations.

Hon. members will recall that a whole series of complaints were made during the months of June and July. We set up the commission of inquiry so that we could have an independent, impartial, outside body examining witnesses under oath and coming to conclusions as to whether evidence should be referred subsequently to attorneys general. I have consulted the law officers of the Crown, and they tell me that the proper course to follow at the moment is to refer such allegations to the royal commission set up by the government last July.

Mr. Broadbent: With respect, Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot have it both ways. In the speech he made in this House on a nice, quiet Friday afternoon in which he announced that a break-in had taken place involving a legally constituted political party, the Solicitor General at least in that instance saw it as his obligation to inform hon. members of this House about some of these activities. In light of his own precedent in this regard, is the minister now saying that any other allegations made involving criminal wrongdoing by the RCMP will not be brought before members of this House but simply referred to the royal commission in the normal course of business as he sees it?

Mr. Fox: For an hon. member who is alleged to be leading a party which is very concerned about civil liberties of Canadians I find it amazing that he believes that every time a complaint comes forward—

Mr. Broadbent: No one is saying that.

Mr. Fox: —I should immediately bring to the floor of this House the nature of the complaint, the names of the people involved and the names of those against whom the complaint is directed. A number of questions have been raised in the course of former royal commissions of inquiry. Facts have been brought to the attention of those federal royal commissions, and those commissions have made suggestions and recommendations that the evidence be brought to the attorneys general of the provinces in which events occurred, and that is the procedure we intend to follow.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND
WELFARE CONCERNING ACTIVITIES IN QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister, and it has to do with the subject raised initially by the Leader of the Opposition about the very fundamental issue of ministerial responsibility in the field of national security. I would like to refer to the statement yesterday by the Minister of National Health and Welfare. She said that unfounded serious allegations—

Miss Bégin: Where did I say that?