

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

LEAKING OF NAMES OF CERTAIN NEWSPAPER REPORTERS ALLEGEDLY BEING INVESTIGATED BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE—REQUEST FOR PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is somewhat supplementary to the one directed by the hon. member for Calgary North to the Solicitor General. In view of the fact that the names of at least five or six individuals who are newspaper reporters have been leaked in respect of an RCMP investigation dealing with security, and in view of the minister's answer to the other hon. member, will he inform the House why that information concerning these individuals was leaked to the press and the general public, and what kind of action he will be taking to ensure that they will be defended against misleading statements affecting their civil liberties?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, we do not know how the story originated that appeared in the paper in Calgary. We are checking that out. But, as I said in reply to the earlier question, there is a long tradition in this House neither to confirm nor deny when a police investigation is under way because it would be counter-productive to do so.

Mr. Knight: In view of the fact this issue is becoming very crucial for these five individuals, affecting their life style and their employment in a particular industry, will the minister make a statement on motions assuring that these individuals' civil rights will be protected, and explaining how this story was leaked to the press?

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, if their rights have been interfered with so far, that they have been interfered with by the publication of the story in the Calgary paper.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: We are going to try to find out how that story came about, and I hope to be ready to answer further questions on this matter. I will be appearing before the justice committee this afternoon on my estimates and I will try to provide further information. We have no intention of interfering with the civil liberties of these people.

Mr. Knight: You have already.

Mr. Allmand: No, we have not and, as I say, I cannot give any further information on the subject at this time.

INQUIRY AS TO EXISTENCE OF FILES ON CERTAIN NEWSPAPER REPORTERS ALLEGEDLY BEING INVESTIGATED BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): As a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in view of the kind of answer we are getting on this subject in order to cover up, would the minister now either confirm or deny that files are kept on members of the press in the same way as there are files on members of parliament and other

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people? Is there a file on these people in reference to the matter I raised this afternoon?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, there could be files on certain members of the press if they have been involved in criminal offences or subversive activities. Again, there is a long standing tradition in this House, which has been followed by the hon. member's party as well as by this party, not to reveal whether there are files on individuals. In the same way, there has been a longstanding tradition not to confirm or deny when an investigation is under way. If we were to confirm that there was an investigation under way against certain individuals it would alert those individuals to the fact that the police were doing that, and consequently this would be counter-productive.

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CRIMINAL CODE

POSSIBILITY OF AMENDMENT TO CLARIFY CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ABORTION CAN TAKE PLACE

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Justice. Now that both the Minister of Health for Ontario and the president-elect of the Canadian Medical Association have accused the minister of passing the buck on abortion, and have called upon him to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code that would remove the ambiguity surrounding the present law, is the minister prepared to introduce an amendment to the law that will clearly specify the terms under which abortion can take place?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the law which parliament did pass clearly put a certain responsibility on hospital committees to determine when abortions might be performed. I think I very accurately stated the view of parliament in indicating that this responsibility should be carried out. It was parliament's hope in passing that law that only a medical judgment, responsibly made, could intervene to say when an abortion might indeed be legal. Therefore I deny completely that this is any passing of the buck. It is a passing of a responsibility which parliament itself imposed on the hospital committees in 1969.

ABORTION—SUGGESTED WITHHOLDING OF MEDICARE FUNDS TO CORRECT ABUSES

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of statements published in last night's *Toronto Star*, made by doctors at Toronto area hospitals, including one doctor who had been a member of a hospital abortion committee, that rubberstamping of abortion requests takes place routinely, is the minister considering withholding money being provided under medicare to finance what are clearly non-therapeutic abortions, a practice that is contrary to the spirit and, according to the Minister of Justice, contrary to the letter of the present law passed by parliament?