

Oral Questions

of Newfoundland. It is very much our intention that any such commission would lean heavily on the work which has already been done—and a very significant volume it is—and bring together the conclusions and experience of individual Newfoundlanders quite quickly rather than take a long time for this work.

NEWFOUNDLAND—GUARANTEE OF JOBS FOR RAILWAY
EMPLOYEES PENDING COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): The indication was given, in answer to earlier questions on this subject, that the minister or the CNR would put an end to the lay-offs which have been taking place and which are presently taking place—that a freeze would be applied, at least to July 1977. Would the minister assure the House that the jobs of CNR workers will be “frozen” until the commission presents its report?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): I believe it would be more accurate to say there have been strong expressions of hope that such a freeze, particularly on the part of the CNR, would accompany the commission's work. I have had discussions with representatives of labour concerning this aspect and I have also discussed the matter with the CN. One of the problems might be to define the situation in appropriate language so that the railway company would not be called upon to operate with complete rigidity during the period of the study, but, rather, attempt to assure that the basic levels of service would not be allowed to deteriorate while the study was taking place. This is a view I have put forward to Canadian National and I shall be having further discussions with the provincial government.

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● (1430)

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

ALLEGED ESTABLISHMENT OF ESPIONAGE TRAINING CENTRE
IN MONTREAL CUBAN CONSULATE

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a question to the Solicitor General.

Would the minister agree to make this afternoon or tomorrow a complete and detailed statement on the circumstances surrounding the setting up at the Cuban consulate in Montreal of a training centre for spies?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to take into consideration the hon. member's representations.

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question.

Considering that the investigation conducted by the RCMP was undertaken following the explosion which took place at

[Mr. Lang.]

the Cuban consulate in 1972, did the Solicitor General since then receive from the RCMP periodical reports on the suspicious activities going on in the consulate and when approximately were the RCMP's suspicions confirmed?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, as Solicitor General of Canada, I normally receive periodical reports from the RCMP's security service on activities which might present a danger for the interests of our country, but I think that both sides of this House have always agreed that it would be rather difficult to reveal their contents.

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a final supplementary question. Could the minister tell the House if the content of the RCMP reports is brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and of the Prime Minister on a regular basis?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, each time the interest of the country is involved or the security service discovers something, this should be brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and of the Prime Minister; the usual practice is to bring such facts to the attention of both these ministers.

[English]

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES BY
EMBASSY OFFICIALS

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Solicitor General. In view of the fact that the minister's predecessor confirmed some time ago that the RCMP were well aware of foreign espionage agents posing as diplomats within embassies in Canada, and this prior to the expulsion of the Cubans as well as the Soviet air attache Vasiliev, can the minister now assure the House that as far as the RCMP are concerned there exists at the present time no further individual or individuals taking part in subversive or espionage activities within any embassy or consulate on Canadian soil?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it is the normal duty of the RCMP security service to monitor activities of such a kind nature. Such activities, when they do exist, are monitored and the results of such monitoring brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities in the government of Canada.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

SUGGESTED PURCHASE OF BELL HOVERCRAFT FOR CANADIAN
COAST GUARD

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. In view of the fact that the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has invested over \$10 million under the federal program for the advancement of industrial technology to help develop a viable hovercraft industry in Canada, that the coast