

*Nazi War Criminals*

respond at this point, given the number of questions he has asked.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the Hon. Member's questions, as far as I can remember them. This unit in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is still operating. We intend for it to continue operating. The Solicitor General (Mr. MacKay) and I have met several times to review its activities. Where matters now stand, there are active investigations under way. As the Hon. Member knows, there are many difficulties in respect of what kind of prosecutions can be launched. We are looking at any situation which involves the possibility of extradition. We are looking at possible deportation. One of the difficulties in that connection is that the records are not always available to show what answers certain people who landed in Canada made at the time.

There is one particular case where we may well be able to initiate a prosecution in that direction. Hopefully we will get the remaining necessary evidence in the next several weeks.

This work is continuing. It is our intention that this unit continue to operate. If satisfactory evidence is obtained, prosecutions will be launched while the present commission carries on its functions. There is no reason that that should not be the case. We are not proposing that the commission proceed and that all other activities cease. They will go on apace. Of course they will also assist the commission and turn over to him all information they have on hand. I assure the hon. gentleman that that work will continue unimpeded.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) is next, and then I will recognize the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) for one further question.

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, I have two very brief questions. First let me say to the Minister that I applaud the actions of the Government today. I think it is well past the time when the Government of Canada should have acted in this regard.

Is it the intention of the Government to give the commission full access to Cabinet documents in order that it can have all the relevant information it requires?

Also, how does the Government propose to maintain the confidentiality of information which may be forthcoming from citizens with regard to other citizens of Canada and their alleged involvement in Nazi war crimes? We must recognize that we are not only talking about matters which will turn out to be real but about the possibility of matters which may turn out to be inaccurate, information that in fact may not be accurate and could destroy the lives of people.

I think the Minister could tell me fairly quickly how we propose to ensure the necessary degree of confidentiality to enable people not to be victimized by what I suppose could be vindictive actions taken by others against them.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Mr. Speaker, these are sensible questions; it is a refreshing change.

**Mr. Deans:** Do you never give up?

**Mr. Crosbie:** Those comments were not for the hon. gentleman; just refreshing generally. With respect to the question concerning full access to Cabinet documents, the Commissioner will have full access to whatever documents a commissioner with the power of subpoena and so on is entitled to have. I cannot say that he will have full access to all Cabinet documents.

We all know the present contretemps. We all know the situation where one Prime Minister in a former administration agrees and some difficulties may arise. If the Commissioner says to us that he needs access to certain Cabinet documents because he thinks they may reveal x, y or z, then we will endeavour to give him access to them and do what we can to assist him.

I cannot commit myself more than that because there are some problems with Cabinet documents. However, he will have full access to all other government documents, such as immigration records, citizenship records, External Affairs records, Department of Justice records, RCMP files and personnel records.

The Hon. Member pointed out a real danger. We do not want people such as John X, an alleged war criminal, exposed in public when no one knows whether or not he is one. This could present a danger such as we saw in the Grange Commission. Of course the terms of reference direct the Commissioner that the proceedings of an inquiry be held in camera on all matters where the Commissioner deems it desirable, in the public interest or in the interest of ensuring the privacy of individuals involved in specific cases which may be examined.

The Commissioner will have to use his own good judgment and good sense in determining how he will deal with specific cases of individuals to protect their privacy. He will have to decide what criteria he will use. We certainly want him to be very careful in that respect. That is all that I can tell the hon. gentleman. A great deal will depend upon how the Commissioner decides to proceed in that regard.

**Mr. Speaker:** As I said a moment ago, I will recognize one supplementary question from the Hon. Member for Windsor West and then end it.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. In view of the Minister's comments about not having matters slowed down which would otherwise continue while the royal commission is in operation, would he instruct his Parliamentary Secretary to propose at the next sitting of the Justice Committee a motion to reverse the decision taken by the Conservative majority in that committee not to hear Professor Irwin Kotler, past President of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and representatives of the Network Canadian Jewish Student Movement? These two groups were recommended by the steering committee to the standing committee as witnesses to be heard on the matter of amendments to the Criminal Code Bill before the committee, dealing with the issue of trying war criminals in Canada for activities which had taken place outside the country.