connection with employees in the Post Office in order to be of assistance to that particular commission.

Mr. Dinsdale: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It is precisely for this reason, that the responsibility be placed where it lies, which under our system of government is with the government, that I am asking these questions. Will the Postmaster General accept his responsibility and acquaint himself with the facts, which he indicated he was utterly ignorant of yesterday, and assure the House that he will accept responsibility; and will he also assure the House that the affairs of the Post Office are not being conducted illegally? I am not talking about the responsibility of his security personnel but his responsibility. That is the point.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman had cared to listen to my comments yesterday, I undertook that responsibility very seriously in replying to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, and I am fully intent, Mr. Speaker, on doing exactly that. Again the hon. gentleman refers to "facts". If the hon. gentleman has facts which might help me in my investigation—

Mr. Clark: Ask the Solicitor General.

Mr. Blais: —I would be pleased if he would make them available to me. I just wish the hon. gentleman would pay some attention. I also indicated yesterday that indeed I recognized that it will be difficult for me to conduct an investigation inside the Post Office unless I receive information from the RCMP. That information has been requested and I am still awaiting a reply from the RCMP.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

METHOD USED TO INTERCEPT MAIL—DATE MINISTER LEARNED MAIL WAS OPENED

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Yesterday the Postmaster General stated that there could be no interception of the mail without the authorization of the security and investigation branch of the Post Office. On the same day the Solicitor General admitted that under the RCMP code name, "Operation Cathedral" letters had been opened. What I want to ask the minister is, firstly, was Operation Cathedral carried on with the authorization of the postal authorities? If it was not, how was this interception carried on? Can the minister confirm whether or not the RCMP have paid informants in the Post Office who intercept mail and pass information on to the RCMP, or what other method is used to intercept mail without the authorization of the Postmaster General's department and in violation of the Post Office Act?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, what I indicated yesterday was that there was in fact some mail which had been intercepted and was opened by the RCMP on the security service side of the force. This is something that came to my attention—the opening of the mails as opposed to the monitoring of the covers or envelopes which has gone on. The question of the opening of the mail was brought to my attention yesterday and I have not been able to determine very clearly the exact nature of the people who are involved. That is one of the reasons I decided to refer the matter to the Attorney General of Canada for his opinion on the fact that there was indeed the opening of mail and, secondly, to the royal commission, in order that a complete investigation can be made.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When the minister informed the House that there had been illegal actions on the part of the RCMP on several occasions, he said that his senior officials had assured him that there were no further illegal actions which had been perpetrated. Yesterday he told us that Operation Cathedral has opened mail, clearly illegally. I should like to ask the minister, in addition, when he first learned about Operation Cathedral, and if he did not know about it prior to the last few days is he then telling the House his senior officials lied to him when they told him there were no further illegal activities by the RCMP? Either the minister was misinformed by his officials or he is misinforming the House, and surely he owes this House an explanation of what disciplinary action he has taken if he has been lied to by those who advise him.

• (1502)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I gave information to the House last June, as a matter of fact, when a question had been asked as to whether there had been any other illegal activities. It is quite clear that hon. members on the other side are willing to give very clear and very quick legal rulings on certain operations of the RCMP. Some of those operations I believe would require a very serious hearing before the courts to determine the legality or non-legality of them.

As to the question of the Cathedral Operation, the opening of mail, which is perhaps a more clear case than some of the others that have been brought to our attention, the first time I was advised of the actual opening of mail was yesterday during my conversation with the force. I was aware of other Cathedral operations which refer only to the question of examining the outside cover of an envelope. That is something I learned of on September 13 of this year. I believe that answers the question the hon. member has asked.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST OFFICIALS WHO FAILED TO REVEAL ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES TO MINISTER

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the minister has not answered my question. The minister has stood before the House on several occasions stating that he had the categorical assurance of his officials that there were no other illegal activities carried on by the RCM Police. Now, he has to tell us that there have been illegal activities carried on. Surely, in terms of ministerial