

Friday in a very preliminary manner, and over the weekend the director general of the security office and the Commissioner of the RCMP were able to ascertain additional facts. We discussed the matter again on Monday and on Tuesday we had the matter brought to the attention of the Attorney General of Canada. We brought it to the attention of the federal Commission of Inquiry into the Practices and Procedures of the RCMP on Thursday and to the attention of the attorney general of the province of Quebec on Friday.

● (1422)

NAME OF PERSON AUTHORIZING PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS BREAK-IN

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on being able to smuggle a prepared statement into the proceedings as effectively as he did the other day. I think I should point out that the unusual position the minister was in the other day was that he was introducing—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, in the interests of the continuing coverup hon. members opposite are trying to shout down questions from this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The minister has indicated that he knew for a full week of these matters before he brought them to the attention of parliament and then he brought them in a way through which he would not be subject to questions. Since the minister has known of these matters for more than a week now, I can assume that being advised of these illegalities the minister undertook an inquiry into them. I should like him to tell the House now who authorized the break-in relating to the Parti Québécois files and information and what reasons were given to the minister by whoever authorized it as to the reasons for it?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the matter was indeed brought to my attention as I indicated in a very preliminary way on the previous Friday. Of course, I think it was my duty to try to obtain more facts before making a speech. I did bring it to the attention of the House as soon as it was possible after having had an opportunity to speak to a number of people involved with the matter. I had the opportunity to review the matter with my predecessors, the two previous solicitors general, who have clearly indicated to me that they had no knowledge whatsoever of the facts in question. I also had the opportunity of reviewing the matter with the Commissioner of the RCMP and the director general of security services who had made a number of inquiries within the security service itself to determine that the matter had been discussed at the most senior echelons of the security service, that is at the echelon of the then director general of the security service.

Mr. Clark: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has said that the matter has been discussed at the

Oral Questions

most senior levels. When was it discussed? What I am interested in is, who authorized the action? Will the minister answer that simple question?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I think I answered the question during the course of my previous reply. It is quite clear that the matter had been discussed at the highest echelons of the security service—

An hon. Member: Who authorized it?

Mr. Fox:—and before the operation had been carried out it was brought to the attention of the director general of the security service.

Mr. Hees: Who authorized the operation?

ALLEGED ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES—REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously going to have to look further into this question of the authority on which the director general then acted and the degree to which there was involvement or implicit or explicit direction by the government of Canada. To that end, and since there is a great deal of confusion about what is going on—the former minister said he might have been advised but he is not really sure and the minister is quoted as saying—I say only quoted as saying—that it would be fair to conclude that he was lied to by the RCMP—since we have opened this very important question of ministerial responsibility and since the minister himself has impugned the reputation of the RCMP Police, I should like to ask whether he would now be prepared to recommend to his colleagues that a special committee of this House of Commons be established with the power and mandate to look into all aspects of this question of illegal activities by the security services, including the involvement or at least knowledge of responsible ministers or officers of the Privy Council?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I cannot let the premises mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition go by. The present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs indicated to me quite clearly, in no uncertain terms this morning, that he in no way was advised or aware of the act in question concerning Parti Québécois files. The other point is this: at no point did I ever say I was lied to by the RCMP, nor did I impugn the reputation of the force.

● (1427)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fox: If you look at the debates which have taken place here over the past few months, you can easily see who has been throwing allegations around this House in an unfair manner.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Shame!