

of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, when he shifted blame on the shoulders of Ted Finn—to shift the blame on to the RCMP Commissioner?

[English]

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this Minister has at all times shouldered his responsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1425)

Mr. Kelleher: I have stood here day after day, as is expected of me, and I have answered fully and frankly every proper and sensible question put to me.

With respect to Mr. Besso, as I am sure the Hon. Member well knows, he has commenced a civil action against the RCMP for services rendered. That is presently pending and is now before the courts. He has his remedies which may be available to him in that action.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS OF RCMP

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister wants the House to accept that the only political responsibility of a Minister is to answer questions and never to resign. In the case of the security service it was the director who had to resign. Who will take the responsibility in connection with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for this serious failing that has been revealed?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I will be the first to admit that a Minister's responsibility is to do more than to stand here and to answer questions fully and frankly in the House. I have also been doing the other bit. Each and every time that a problem has arisen within the Force, immediately upon it coming to my attention I have taken prompt and efficient action to remedy any problems.

If the Hon. Member has some specific allegations to make, then why does he not come forward and give them to me and I will see that they are looked into fully?

Mr. Kaplan: I just did!

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO INFORMER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said that he is prepared to take all the actions appropriate to his sense of responsibility. I want to follow up on what he said earlier.

Mr. Besso's accusation, as everyone knows, is extremely serious. He has said that he provided information which in his judgment, presumably, was sufficient to have headed off the destruction of this Air-India aircraft and saved, presumably, all those lives. He has further added that there is documentary proof of his allegation to be found in RCMP files. The Minister categorically said just a few minutes ago that he

checked this out, that he has come back and is satisfied that there was no wrong-doing or incompetence.

Can the Minister tell us if he checked with Mr. Besso or did he simply check with the RCMP, about whom Mr. Besso was making those charges?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have made it quite clear that the then Minister of Transport made a statement in 1985, and again I quote: "I should point out to the House that there was no indication that there was a specific threat to Flight 182".

I fully reinvestigated this matter this morning with the assistance of the Commissioner of the RCMP with respect to this particular story. What I am saying quite clearly and plainly to the House is that that statement still stands. It was true then and it is true now as I stand here. I do not see how I can be more clear than that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, with respect, the question is not one of clarity, the question is one of competence. That is what is at stake here.

Since the accusation was made about the incompetence of the RCMP and since the person making the accusation said that documentary evidence exists that supports his case, does the Minister not feel in terms of his obligation to the House that he has an obligation to check for the evidence that Mr. Besso says is available, and not just ask the RCMP?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am answering the accusation. I went to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I went to the Commissioner. We fully discussed it. We looked into the allegations. The RCMP reviewed their files. They were in touch with their officers on the West Coast. I am telling the Hon. Member that I accept the evidence, the integrity and honesty of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kelleher: —over a person who is an alleged informer and who was looking to receive services for something he told us. That is not true or accurate.

● (1430)

AVAILABILITY OF EVIDENCE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): With respect, I think that the Minister has just proven beyond any question that he is totally incompetent in terms of getting to the bottom of the problem.

In fairness to the integrity and reputation of the RCMP, and all the RCMP people who wish to do a good job—