

Oral Questions

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the first part of the hon. member's question, the standing instructions have always been that the security service, as any other police force, must carry out its mandate within the framework of the law. With regard to the second part of the question, of course we are always willing to consider amendments to the law, if they are necessary to assure the security of this country.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Solicitor General will not answer my simple question.

Mr. Olivier: What is your question?

Mr. Woolliams: Well, I have put my question twice, and I will put it thrice.

Some hon. Members: Louder.

Mr. Olivier: We cannot hear you.

Mr. Woolliams: Did the former solicitor general receive the advice of officers of the Crown before giving those instructions which apparently were illegal?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear from my initial answer that the authorization was given in a specific case by the solicitor general, my immediate predecessor, on the condition that before execution the opinion of law officers of the Crown be obtained.

As a matter of fact, the answer to this question was tabled in the House last December at the time I tabled the annual report under the Official Secrets Act. It indicates quite clearly that an authorization was sought for the opening of mail, and that the authorization was not executed because there was an opinion given by law officers of the Crown that it was not within the power of the solicitor general to authorize any such openings. I will take the hon. member's suggestion, that there ought to be changes in this area, under advisement. I hope, if changes are presented, the hon. member will want to be the spokesman of his party in supporting those changes.

* * *

GRAIN**DATE OF PAYMENT UNDER STABILIZATION PLAN—REASON FOR DELAY**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. As the minister is aware, net farm income fell by 20 per cent last year and it fell by 11 per cent this year. I would like to ask the minister when payment will be made to farmers from the Western Grain Stabilization Plan since all statistics are now in? Will that payment take place very shortly or is it the intention of the minister to wait until the election is called?

[Mr. Woolliams.]

● (1442)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite wrong in saying that all statistics are in. Indeed, the year in question is 1977 and, to my knowledge, 1977 is still running, grain is still being sold and costs are still being incurred. The stabilization payment is based on figures after 1977 is complete and they can be calculated.

Mr. Nystrom: The minister knows the statistics are based on the crop year. If he had been at the Outlook Conference he would know the statistics are in and were given to us here on Monday and Tuesday. I would like to ask him why the delay.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, after spending seven years opposing the stabilization bill I would have thought the hon. member would at least know that it is written on the basis of the calendar year.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**BREAK-INS BY SECURITY SERVICE—PROTECTION OF THE CITIZEN**

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Several days ago the right hon. Prime Minister said, after having stated that ministers could not be responsible for the activities of security forces, when asked where was the citizens' protection:

We have the protection of the courts. If you want to break into somebody's house, you get a warrant. A court decides if you have reasonable and probable cause to do it. If you break in without a warrant, a citizen lays a charge and the police are found guilty. So this is control on the criminal side . . .

I want to ask the Solicitor General if he agrees with this novel theory of protection and, also, how does a citizen lay a charge and get the protection of the courts if he does not even know who did the break-in?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite clear what the question is. I think the hon. member wants to know what type of procedures have been set up and are being contemplated by the government. I would refer him—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fox: If the hon. member is interested in the answer, he should let me speak; if he is not, I will sit down.

Mr. Alexander: Dont be so touchy, Francis.

Mr. Fox: The government set up the Marin Commission of Inquiry which reported in 1976. The commission recommended to the government the establishment of an external review authority which will be empowered to receive complaints from citizens and to conduct an independent investigation of those complaints to see whether or not any wrongdoing has occurred.