

POSSIBILITY PARTY QUEBECOIS MENTIONED BY PRIME
MINISTER

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Since this has become a part of the public record, will the Solicitor General tell the House now whether the Prime Minister, to use the language of General Dare, spoke specifically of the Party Quebecois?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): We do not make public the private discussions which go on in cabinet and in cabinet committees. It is true that when we were discussing these general guidelines we discussed how they might apply to many political parties, but this only confirms what I have announced in this House on many occasions when people asked whether, for example, members of parliament, members of trade unions or members of political parties are subject to surveillance just because they belong to those groups, and I have always answered that they are not. However, the members of any legitimate group can be subject to surveillance if they are suspected of criminal or subversive activity, and that is what was being discussed.

Mr. Clark: Is it the position of the Solicitor General and the government of Canada that General Dare was incorrect and not stating the facts when he said in his letter that the Prime Minister spoke specifically of the Party Quebecois?

Mr. Allmand: I attended those meetings, and while different things were discussed, I cannot remember who discussed what. However, what I discussed with General Dare this morning was the decision of the cabinet committee. He has confused the decision of the cabinet committee with perhaps the input of different people in making up the final decision.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You have a selective memory.

TO WHOM GENERAL DARE REPORTS

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I should like to pursue the questioning of the Solicitor General to try to determine precisely what apparatus exists within the government with respect to this whole area. Yesterday the Prime Minister refused to indicate the frequency of his meetings with General Dare, nor would he indicate whether the Solicitor General was in fact present at those meetings. Can the Solicitor General advise the House of the line of command which exists for General Dare? Does he report to the Solicitor General or directly to the Prime Minister?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, General Dare reports to the commissioner of the RCMP who in turn reports to me, and I report to the Prime Minister and this House.

Oral Questions

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF MAINTENANCE OF
INDEPENDENCE OF FORCE

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made repeated references to this cabinet committee on security and intelligence which oversees the operation of government agents in the area of security and intelligence and at which certain conclusions were reached which were communicated to the police. I wonder if the Acting Prime Minister might give the House an explanation of the terms of reference and membership of such a committee, and is it the position of the government that RCMP inquiries may be restricted by such a body, or is the independence of the force to be maintained regardless of conclusions reached or instructions communicated to the RCMP?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the independence of the police is protected. Of course, the government has to take responsibility for all matters lying under its jurisdiction, but in pursuing that objective it does not interfere with the independence of the police.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

POSSIBILITY OF UNDERWATER LISTENING DEVICES ON EAST
AND WEST COASTS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. Would the minister tell the House whether a Lieutenant-Commander Barry Ridgewell and/or other members of the Canadian Armed Forces have been searching the continental shelf off Canada's west coast for certain underwater listening devices and, if so, would he tell us what they have found?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, they have not been searching for such devices.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question. Apart from whether or not they have been searching, according to news reports perhaps they should be. Would the minister tell the House whether the government has any information, either from observing trawlers or any other source, that would lead them to believe that a foreign power has established underwater listening devices either off the west coast or the east coast of Canada?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, we have no evidence whatever that that has been done.

Mr. Broadbent: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister explain to the House why a presumably responsible officer in the armed services of Canada has made such a contention, and if what he says is a blatant falsehood would the minister tell the House what disciplinary action the government plans to take?