

Supply—Privy Council

Privy Council with respect to the second item on the same page of the estimates, expenses of the royal commission on security procedures. I had the impression that the commission had finished its work and made its report to the Prime Minister. Yesterday during the question period I tried to get Mr. Speaker's eye to ask the Prime Minister if my impression was correct.

In the vote for the commission for the coming year there is a sum of \$226,000. How much longer will the commission take to complete its work, and when will its report be ready? I ask this for a very specific reason. The former solicitor general, who has now gone to another place, before he became a cabinet minister had a bill on the order paper which would certainly curtail, if not prohibit, the use of wire tapping and electronic eavesdropping. The present hon. member for York-Scarborough has a similar bill on the order paper now, and I also have one.

Up until now, when hon. members have raised questions about the advisability of passing legislation either outlawing such procedures or at least regulating them, they have been told they should not do anything until the government receives the report of the royal commission which is looking into security procedures.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I would be very interested in obtaining information concerning the status of that royal commission, when it might make its report and whether the government, once it has that report, will table it in the house.

Mr. Walker: I can report to the hon. member that the work of the commission is nearing completion and that the report is expected to be available to the government within the next month. This is the information I have.

I should also like to point out that on September 18, when the question of tabling the report came up, the Prime Minister answered in this way:

Mr. Speaker, it is conceivable that there will be matters in it which I will not want to table in the house. The report may concern security matters which should not be made public. I do not know; I want to see it first. The hon. member cannot ask me this kind of hypothetical question and expect an answer on the subject.

I hasten to point out that the question to which the Prime Minister was replying was not asked by the hon. member who asked the present question. It is my understanding that

[Mr. Orlikow.]

the report itself is expected within the next month.

Mr. Orlikow: I might make the comment that of course one would not expect any government to make public a complete report which might very well deal in detail with security matters, and an investigation of espionage by our security personnel. At the same time I hope the Prime Minister will not expect members on both sides of this house who are interested in a law which would regulate and even prohibit wire tapping simply to take somebody's word that the report says we ought or ought not to pass legislation on this matter, without seeing at least that part of the report.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, earlier it had been my intention to engage in the debate relating to the presence of ministers in the house during the last couple of weeks. My hon. colleagues, however, have done such a commendable job in presenting the logic of the situation and in presenting the arguments for our side that I thought it unnecessary for me to take part in the debate in the present circumstances. I think the feeling of members of the house has been adequately expressed.

May I make one brief observation about the estimates. Some months ago the government in power made a decision in relation to the salt rebate which, of course, comes under the estimates of the Department of Fisheries. At that time \$300,000 was automatically withdrawn from the Atlantic fishermen. I have just returned from having visited my constituency, where I found that 15,000 people faced a difficult winter as a result of the withdrawal of this so-called band aid policy.

Some weeks ago the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo attempted to justify the position of the government with regard to the abandonment of the band aid policy of support for the fishermen of the Atlantic coast. I believe it is generally agreed there was a great need for a long term plan or policy. How, therefore, can the government justify an expenditure last year, for example, of \$600,000 to the commission on the status of women? I hasten to tell hon. members that on the east coast of Canada the women have a status equal to that of the women in eastern Canada. We do not take issue with this particular point. We are not attempting to suggest that we are not interested in a priority of this kind. We are wondering, however, how a government can justify placing the Atlantic fishermen in a compromised position while