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RCMP activities subject of Royal Commission and Quebec inquiries

Allegations of Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service involvement in certain illegal activities in carrying out its responsibilities have attracted widespread media interest in Canada. On January 9, the Solicitor General, Francis Fox, issued the following statement clarifying the nature and extent of the RCMP's activities as well as the Federal Government's co-operation with the Royal (McDonald) Commission and Quebec (Keable) Commission inquiries:

Since June of last year, a number of allegations have been made concerning possible illegal acts committed by some members of the RCMP and in some cases allegedly involving members of other law-enforcement agencies. An initial examination by the RCMP of some of these allegations indicated that some could indeed be well founded in fact. As a result, the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry chaired by Mr. Justice David McDonald of the Supreme Court of Alberta to investigate these allegations and to examine the practices and procedures of the RCMP, particularly as regards the Security Service.

Full access to files

Since the creation of the federal Commission of Inquiry last July, facts surrounding the allegations of illegal acts have been handed over by the RCMP to Mr. Justice McDonald and his fellow commissioners. The Commission's counsel and its investigators have full and complete access to all of the files of the RCMP in their task of conducting their investigation thoroughly and in an independent manner.

To date, the McDonald Commission has held public hearings in two areas of concern: the unlawful entry of the premises occupied by the Agence Presse Libre du Quebec [a left-wing news agency] at 3459 St-Hubert Street in Montreal and the mail-opening operations of the RCMP. Their investigation is continuing in several other areas and the Commission has announced that public hearings will be continuing as of Wednesday of this week.

During the month of June, the govern-

ment of the province of Quebec set up a Provincial Commission of Inquiry headed by lawyer Jean Keable. After I gave the Attorney-General of Quebec information concerning a barn burning, the unauthorized removal of dynamite from a construction site and the obtaining of membership lists of the Parti Québécois, the mandate of the Provincial Commission was broadened to cover these acts.

In November and December of last year the Provincial Commission, in the view of the Federal Government, exceeded its mandate by inquiring into the internal operations of the force and by pursuing a line of questioning beyond the specific acts referred to in its mandate. As a result, applications are pending before the Court of Appeal of Quebec to decide the very important question of the extent to which a Provincial Commission of Inquiry can investigate the operations of a federal agency. A stay of proceedings pending a decision on the merits of the case on January 16 was denied by the Court of Appeal on December 16.

Subpoena served

On December 29, 1977, I was served with a subpoena by the Keable Commission seeking the production of the following documents:

(a) Written approval or written confirmation of oral approval given by the then Solicitor General Mr. J.P. Goyer to Mr. John Starnes, then Director General of the Security Service, or others on or about November 3, 1972 and all other written or oral approvals confirmed in writing given by Mr. J.P. Goyer to Mr. John Starnes or others covering electronic

William McDougall, one of the fathers of Confederation, was born 156 years ago today near Toronto. McDougall, a lawyer and journalist, entered the Great Coalition of 1864 as provincial secretary and was a delegate to the Charlottetown, Quebec and Westminster conferences which culminated in the establishment of Confederation.

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