

Adjournment Debate

The minister never read the documents that the RCMP had in their hands, although to the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. O'Sullivan) he said he had.

I should now like to refer to the Criminal Code. If the RCMP did not have any authority, I would ask the Solicitor General, who is in charge of the RCMP, to make an investigation in order to protect the Minister of Labour. But if the RCMP did have authority, what did they have to be armed with? Section 443 makes it very clear:

A justice who is satisfied by information upon oath in Form 1—

I do not have time to get into a discussion of Form 1.

that there is reasonable ground to believe that there is in a building—
—and that in that building are documents which might lead to some impropriety or illegality, in which case they would then be armed with an affidavit and a search warrant. Either the RCMP had the documents and the minister knows, or if they did not have the documents the Solicitor General should then inquire why the RCMP acted illegally against one of the ministers of the crown.

I speak tonight as a member of parliament, not as a Conservative speaking against a Liberal. If the RCMP did not have the proper documents, then the Solicitor General has a responsibility to find out what went on.

These are the questions that I want to ask. The minister said the RCMP had certain documents which did not pertain to his office. How did he know that if he did not read them? Secondly, why did he give them access to what they wanted if they did not pertain to his office? If somebody came into my office and said: "We are taking your files, Eldon"—

Miss Campbell (South Western Nova): That is a mere play on words.

Mr. Woolliams: I do not intend to get into a debate with the hon. lady, but if they came into my office and said, "Look, we are taking your files", I would ask what was their authority. I would then ask for a lawyer or examine the documents. But what did the Minister of Labour do? He said: "Help yourself to anything you want". I want to know what they took, what authority they had to take it, and why were they there. Would a lawyer or an experienced cabinet minister act in that way? The Minister of Labour is a lawyer, not a layman. He knows the Criminal Code as well as I do. He knows the RCMP are supposed to be armed with a warrant if they make a search.

The hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth also asked whether there were any cabinet documents there. If so, why did he hand them over? What was going on?

I have two further questions to ask. First, if there is nothing wrong, why did the Prime Minister get into the act today and attempt to say that we were trying to lay charges? We were merely seeking information. In addition to that, why did the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), the former Minister of Justice, get up and try to read from Beauchesne, which really had nothing to do with the situation at all? They were ruled out of order, and Mr. Speaker ruled that there was no point of order. I must not discuss his ruling, but it was right on the point.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

● (2220)

Those are all the questions I want to ask. If there was no authority and no documentation, or if there was documentation and the minister did not read it, then how does he know they did not pertain to his office? What was in his office, and what did the minister surrender?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, going back to the time the RCMP came into my office, I recall looking at a form they had, and I recall vaguely some comment to the effect that it was not directed at my particular office. That recollection on my part was the basis for my statement. Let me say that I made a decision, rightly or wrongly, to let the RCMP look at the documents they wanted to look at. I did not know at the time what they were looking at, or what documents they were taking. I did not know what documents in fact they did take. I have had some opportunity subsequent to that time to examine some documents they took, but perhaps not all. That is all I can say, Madam Speaker, in the way of answer to the hon. member's questions.

NATIONAL PARKS—REQUEST THAT RESPONSIBILITY BE REMOVED FROM MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT—ALLEGED CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, the parliament of Canada has passed the National Parks Act which provides that the parks, as outstanding natural areas of national interest, are to be maintained unimpaired for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of present and future generations. Obviously, hunting or commercial activities like mining and lumbering cannot be permitted because of the great changes that would result. Does that sound familiar? It should, because it is a statement from a publicity brochure put out by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Yet once again people across Canada concerned with the preservation of our national parks face a confrontation with the hierarchy of this same department. Land is being withdrawn from Wood Buffalo National Park without the benefit of full public hearing, before the fact, despite previous promises that this sort of thing would not be allowed to happen.

A land use project, funded by the government through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, found approximately 75 square miles of land in a national park suitable for an Indian reserve to be used as part payment of a land entitlement totalling 97,280 acres to the Cree Band, granted under a treaty signed in 1899. The department has already approved in principle the transfer of 41,824 acres of land out of the park in two parcels—one at the Embarass Portage, which has lumbering potential, and the other at Peace Point in the centre of the park where a large gypsum deposit is located. The balance of the entitlement will come from outside the park boundaries.

Peace Point is located in the central area of Wood Buffalo National Park slightly toward the east. It can be reached down the west side of the loop road approximately 77 miles south of Fort Smith.