

Inquiries of the Ministry

time, it seems to me it would be inadvisable to exclude them from the co-ordinating action we hope will flow from the application of Bill C-176.

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NATIONAL SECURITY**QUEBEC—CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF INVESTIGATION OF CRIMINAL AND SEDITIOUS ACTIVITY—EFFICIENCY OF RCMP**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Justice a question of which I gave him notice. Either just prior to the implementation of the War Measures Act or shortly thereafter in accordance with the Quebec Police Act, was the investigation of criminal and seditious activity placed under the control and direction of the Director-General of the Quebec Provincial Police, Mr. St. Pierre, and was all police force assistance basically under such direction and control?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for the courtesy he showed me by giving me notice of his question. My understanding is that pursuant to the authority of section 79 of the Quebec Police Act the Lieutenant Governor in Council of the province of Quebec ordered that the Director-General of the Quebec police force assume, under the authority of the provincial Attorney General, the command of municipal police forces. I do not know if every municipal police force in Quebec was affected by the order. The RCMP could not, of course, be brought within the terms of such order, but the force has been co-operating throughout with the provincial law enforcement authorities.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's answer, were the RCMP—we have had some talk about the RCMP of late—merely asked to render their skillful and knowledgeable assistance to the Quebec Provincial Police? Is it not correct that the RCMP, throughout the world of police forces, are recognized as one of the finest trained forces with the latest and most up-to-date scientific equipment equal to, if not better than, any other national police force in the world?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will appreciate that the question has not been put in the proper form. Perhaps it might be redrafted. If the hon. member wishes the minister to reply I suggest the question should be asked in other terms.

Mr. Woolliams: I agree with you, Mr. Speaker. I got carried away by my rhetoric. Let me put it this way. Would the Minister of Justice give us a report to the effect that the equipment, skill and training of the RCMP are equal to that of any other police force in the world?

Mr. Speaker: Again I would think that at this point the hon. member is asking the minister to express an opinion. I know it would be a very valuable opinion, but that

[Mr. Olson.]

is not what the Chair has to decide. I would think the question in those terms is not in order.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. It has to do with the uncertainty in the answer he gave the other day in connection with the police work. As one who has known the mounted police since the days of the Northwest Mounted Police, although I fully share the opinion of my hon. friend from Calgary North, I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I put this question to the Prime Minister. Would he clear up the implication that there was inefficiency on the part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police so that this great body of men will not be under any shadow in the days ahead?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I thank the right hon. gentleman for giving me the opportunity to do that, Mr. Speaker. I understand that as a result of my answer to the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings who asked me whether anything was going to be done to make the police more efficient there may have been some interpretation that I felt they had not been as efficient as they might have been. I am very happy to say, and I would have the House remember that in my answer I emphasized this, that the police deserve a very great vote of thanks for the way they have operated. This does not take away from my belief, and I believe that of the police themselves, that they are dealing with a new situation in Canada involving a form of terrorism which perhaps has been unknown heretofore and therefore they have not been as trained in the solution of that type of terrorism as we with hindsight might desire. This is in no way a criticism of them. I said it was our society which was unused to this kind of situation and that we had all been caught slightly off guard.

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PENSIONS**OLD AGE SECURITY—ACTION ON INCREASE BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the right hon. gentleman's statement a short while ago that he thought old age pensioners might be able to get through the winter without an increase in their pensions, but that he hoped they would not have to, can he now say whether there will be an increase in the old age pension before Christmas?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, without agreeing with the premise of the question which is not exactly in the terms I put it, I can only say what the Minister of National Health and Welfare has been saying, namely, that in due course he will announce the government's policy on these matters.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): In view of current news stories about white papers and committee reports, may we have an assurance that action on this