

*Minister's Statement on Security Group*

[English]

**COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT**

## TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table in both official languages the Annual Report of the Director of Research under the Combines Investigation Act.

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[Translation]

**NATIONAL SECURITY**

## STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF SECURITY AND RESEARCH PLANNING GROUP

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, because there have been requests by Members of Parliament for information on the Security Planning and Research Group and because there have been some misunderstandings on this subject, I have decided to make a statement at this time.

The subject of the security of the state is a delicate one where the executive must always balance the rights of the state and the liberty of the individual and it is encouraging to me that there is public concern.

The Royal Commission on Security made it clear in October 1968 that, and I quote:

—Canada remains the target of subversive or potentially subversive activities—

That was paragraph 15 of the report. The report further stated, and I quote:

—the duty of the state to protect . . . its institutions from subversion and its policies from clandestine influence is indisputable—

I have just quoted paragraph 28 of the report.

I have established the new Security Planning and Research Group in the Department of the Solicitor General to advise me on internal security matters. The functions of the group are:

1. to study the nature, origin and causes of subversive and revolutionary action, its objectives and techniques as well as the measures necessary to protect Canadians from internal threats;

2. to compile and analyze information collected on subversive and revolutionary groups and their activities, to estimate the nature and scope of internal threats to Canadians and to plan for measures to counter these threats;

3. to advise me on these matters.

It is absolutely wrong to suggest that this group is "an anti-rebel police force" or a "civilian security force".

• (3:40 p.m.)

The Group has no operational duties; they are advisory in nature. In short, the duties of the Group are to conduct research, analysis and planning. This is a far cry from the beginnings of the establishment of a police state as has been implied by some critics. The concept of a police state is as repugnant to the government as it is to all Canadians.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

It was made clear by the Prime Minister that the government does not intend to establish a separate civilian security service when he said in the House of Commons on June 26, 1969, and I quote:

. . . we have come to the conclusion that current and foreseeable problems in Canada can better be dealt with within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police through appropriate modifications to existing structure, than by attempting to create a wholly new and separate service".

There has been no change to this fundamental policy.

In discharging its duties, the Security Planning and Research Group will work closely with the R.C.M. Police Security Service and with other sources which may be able to provide useful information, such as the Armed Forces, other government departments and agencies, other police forces and other governments in Canada.

It is, I think, beyond question that when Parliament established the Department of the Solicitor General in 1966, it was establishing a department, separate from that of the Attorney General, to deal with police matters, criminal investigations, detentions, paroles, pardons and internal security. The Prime Minister also stated in the House of Commons on June 26, 1969, and I quote:

"Some comments in the report . . .

—of the Royal Commission on Security—

. . . which refer to the R.C.M. Police are now properly directed at aspects of government policy. We intend to keep under review our basic policies and procedures in relation to security as the commissioners have recommended. The establishment of the Department of the Solicitor General in 1966 was a major step in this direction".

A parallel might be drawn between security and criminal investigations. When the police gather material in criminal investigations and court action is to follow, it is the Crown prosecutor who assesses the police evidence and, as the Attorney General's representative, decides whether to prosecute. Likewise, the assessment of the seriousness of a security threat to the state should be made by the civil power in concert with police authorities.

To try to achieve an objective assessment and evaluation of the threat to the security of Canadians, the Security Planning and Research Group will consist of a mixture of the disciplines of sociology, criminology, psychology, law, the military and the police. I am hopeful that a mixture of backgrounds such as this will together be able to advise me, and through me, the Cabinet about the aims and intentions of groups that are genuinely revolutionary and prepared to employ violence in achieving their ends, as distinct from those who would promote social change through accepted democratic procedures. The revolutionary phenomenon now exists in many parts of the world—in Europe, in South America, in Asia, in the United States and here in Canada.

Governments are handling these groups in different ways. The Canadian government believes that dissent is healthy and necessary to our society. Canadian society can absorb dissident groups which are not a threat to the physical safety of Canadians and their democratic way of life.

It is the government's responsibility, however, and my responsibility as minister reporting for internal security, to ensure that Canadians are protected from groups who would use violence to achieve their aims. The government