

NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
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Civil Liberties Association Calls for Public Hearing into RCMP's Role In Income Trust Scandal

The BCCLA calls on the Chair of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP to launch a public hearing into former RCMP Commissioner Zaccardelli's decision to advise an opposition Member of Parliament of the existence of a politically sensitive criminal investigation during a federal election

On December 23, 2005, in the heart of the last election period, the complainant MP received confirmation in writing that the RCMP was commencing a criminal investigation into allegations of insider trading by associates of the Liberal government. It was foreseeable that the MP would bring this letter to the attention of the press and public.

Jason Gratl, President of the BCCLA: "Canadians have a right to know whether their national police force meddled in the last federal election. A public hearing will clear the air of the lingering scent of this past episode, and, more importantly, a public hearing may well prevent interference in elections still to come."

The BCCLA's complaint with the Commission was filed on July 17, 2006, and a response was received from the RCMP on January 9, 2007. In the view of the BCCLA, the response is vague and does little to restore public confidence in the political neutrality of the RCMP.

Former Commissioner Dr. Richard Gosse had this to say about the decision to hold a public hearing: "In situations where the matter of the complaint has become the subject of public controversy, the public interest may best be served by the Chairman instituting a Commission hearing. The RCMP's investigation might, in some circumstances, not be expected to resolve the matter, and could unnecessarily lengthen the time taken to address the matter satisfactorily from the public's point of view. Sometimes the credibility of Force members and the complainant's witnesses may be the key issue. A Commission hearing, normally held in public, may be the best solution."

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