

now Minister of Supply and Services to the House of Commons.

I have a question, sir, that relates to an undertaking given by the Prime Minister of Canada to the House of Commons. It is germane in relation to the statement made this morning by former Commissioner Higgitt. The Prime Minister said in this House in answer to two questions on June 22, 1977 the following:

I have had repeated assurances from the commissioner of the RCMP and from the Director General of Security that this

The word "this" relates to an illegal act. The Prime Minister went on to say:

—was an isolated incident and it was in no way a general or special practice of the RCMP to have break-ins.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he stands by that statement made on June 22, 1977?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, yes, I stand by it absolutely. As a matter of fact, the statement was cleared with people in my office and in the RCMP who were working on this particular matter. In so far as doing my duty, it seems to me that I made it clear that I had talked to the former solicitor general in previous circumstances. So far as having done it today, I learned of this testimony over the lunch break. I had time to talk to the former solicitor general, who is now Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and he assured me that former Commissioner Higgitt's testimony is not in conformity with what he has said on previous occasions. I have not had time to talk with the previous one.

I find it a little strange that the Leader of the Opposition stands up indignantly and says that I am attempting to attack him and former Commissioner Higgitt. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the question period is a place where the opposition attacks the government. They have done nothing else in their question, and they did nothing else under the Standing Order. But I am not supposed to answer, because if I answer that it is seen as an attack on the poor Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the question period is supposed to be a place where members of parliament can elicit information from the government. That has not been the case for the last ten years with this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The question that the Prime Minister should be putting to his long list of solicitors general does not deal with the consistency of Commissioner Higgitt's testimony, but deals with the question as to whether the testimony given today to the best of their knowledge is true. I wait to have an assurance from this Prime Minister that there will be a full revelation to this House of Commons of all the details of the efforts he has

made to verify the record with the Minister of Supply and Services.

My question now relates to the invitation by former Commissioner Higgitt today that his advice to former solicitors general was in both oral and written form. May we have an unequivocal undertaking by the Prime Minister, now, that any written recommendations that are still extant will not be destroyed and will, instead, be made public to this House of Commons?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we have given the undertaking that we would turn everything we have over to the royal commission. It has asked for many documents. It has had all it has asked for. We have given them more than that to introduce them to new facts. I think it is a very despicable slur to suggest that we would destroy information—

An hon. Member: You sure would.

Mr. Trudeau: Who said that we sure would? I will kick his ass.

Mr. Paproski: Shame.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1442)

PUBLIC ACCESS TO EVIDENCIARY DOCUMENTS

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice, in the absence of the Solicitor General. The Minister of Justice will be aware of the arguments advanced by council for the cabinet—I am not sure that council was acting for the Attorney General, because he would not tell us—to the effect that certain classes of government documents would only be made public at the option of the government. This argument was, of course, rejected by the commission. Would the Minister of Justice give an undertaking that the documentary material referred to this morning by former Commissioner Higgitt will be permitted to be made public and that the government will not seek any remedies to prevent such material being made public?

Would he also confirm that no argument will be advanced by cabinet before the commission in an effort to prevent the former commissioner testifying in public?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice): The hon. member, along with other hon. members, will be aware that we have taken a straightforward position that the material in our possession is available to the commission. That is a broad statement of our willingness to make available all that possibly could be of use to the commission. In addition, we have made it clear that we would expect the commission, obviously, to have regard for the public interest more broadly, that is, recognize the fact that there are certain classes of documents which deserve continued confidentiality