

the moment, in the heat of debate or the cut and thrust of question period, but comments made carefully and deliberately in a letter, calculated to respond to what the member had asked about this very serious issue?

Your Honour may decide the matter does not warrant being taken to a committee, but I think it is a very valid and legitimate complaint which could affect all of us in this House.

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief because the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) put the facts as I would have put them to you.

I am speaking from memory now and I may be wrong, but I believe a writ of prohibition was granted against proceeding with those charges by the Federal Court. I believe Mr. Bill Gill, QC, of Calgary, appeared in Federal Court. Whether that has anything to do with the facts as set out by the minister or the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) I do not know, but I felt it my duty and my responsibility, being in the House now and hearing this matter argued, to bring this to your attention.

**Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview):** Mr. Speaker, it is with some hesitation that I speak on this matter, not only because of my relative inexperience in the House but also because I was not sworn in at the time the original question was asked by my colleague, the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin). I agreed to second his motion, however, and therefore I feel I should speak on the matter.

The letter which was addressed by the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) to the hon. member for Greenwood raises very serious questions about the frankness with which questions are being answered in this House. The hon. member for Greenwood asked a question of substance dealing with the rights of a member of the RCMP in relation to an inquiry which was going on at the time. I understand the charges against Corporal Radey relate directly to his involvement in the Laycraft inquiry. The minister is as aware of those facts as we on this side of the House; in fact he is even more aware of them than we are.

It was at this point that the minister wrote the letter to the hon. member for Greenwood, to which the minister has referred and which will be put before the committee. The only conclusion one can draw from the letter on its face is that the charges being laid against Corporal Radey have nothing to do with the Laycraft inquiry. That is the *prima facie* reading of the letter. If that is not misleading, I do not know what it is. It is a fine point Mr. Speaker; it is a fine lawyer's point to say this letter does not specifically say that, but nevertheless it leaves that distinct impression because of what the letter omits to say and because of what it covers by its language.

To give you one example, the letter specifically refers to the fact that the allegations against Corporal Radey relate to the fact that he failed to obey the lawful command of his superior. Are we not then entitled to ask what the lawful command of his superior was? As I understand it, and I stand to be corrected, the lawful command of the superior was that the corporal involved should not speak to any commission counsel,

even the counsel for the commission itself. That is not mentioned in this letter.

I think that when a member of parliament such as my colleague, the hon. member for Greenwood, raises a question in good faith with respect to the rights of an individual charged by the RCMP, he is entitled, in a letter, certainly something written after some deliberation, to something which is completely frank and open, not something which is, with great respect, devious and dissimulatory at its best.

• (1532)

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this particular matter would induce the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) to be a little more forthcoming in the type of explanation he gives in the House to avoid this type of situation. If he had been as forthcoming with the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) at the relevant time, we would not be in this situation. I cannot help but remind him and the House that in 1976 when I asked his predecessor why they had the same people investigating l'Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec break-in who did the break-in, everybody more or less shrugged their shoulders. The minister at that time did not see fit to elucidate the matter in the House.

It seems to me that what the Solicitor General has been doing, and which is causing this problem, is that he has not been forthcoming enough in the House. He could easily have made available to the hon. member for Greenwood, who is a very intelligent legal counsel, some of the background documents. The case was being tried in Ottawa, and documents were around. While I do not know whether Your Honour will find a *prima facie* question of privilege, I would hope that in dealing with the matter that you would urge the Solicitor General to refrain from this specious doctrine. Every time a question is asked having anything whatsoever to do with police matters, he is using the coy doctrine of brushing it aside on some imagined ground of national security or super confidentiality. Surely matters of police and security are of vital concern to members of the House and, by the very nature of the subject, require complete and full disclosure by the minister.

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, I was moved to participate in this debate by some of the comments made by my seatmate, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), who pointed out quite accurately that there are two points involved here. One is the question as to whether or not the letter itself can be considered as part of a proceeding of the House so that it would be within the purview of your jurisdiction. I think he has dealt with dispatch with that particular excuse, if it may be termed an excuse, quite well. The fact is that it was something which flowed out of the exchange in the House during question period. It was part of the response to be given to the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) as a result of questions raised in this House.

To put it into perspective, I think the issue is simply this. If it was a clear case that a minister of the Crown in answering question in this House lied, that he gave a falsehood knowing