

that he was not told they were involved in the break-in. A conclusion may be drawn from that, but I suggest it is not the one the hon. member is drawing.

Mr. Broadbent: Why did he not ask?

[*Translation*]

BREAK-IN AT L'AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE—REQUEST FOR
STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I would put my question to the present Minister of Supply and Services.

In view of his responsibilities when he was Solicitor General in 1972, in view also of the serious allegations now made because of this inquiry and the court's decisions, and in view of the importance given by the present Solicitor General in his statement of June 17 as to the role the present Minister of Supply and Services played in this matter, and to clarify and give more dynamism and power to his present position, could the minister tell the House whether he intends to make a statement in the near future on his position as to the conduct of a complete inquiry on this matter, either before the House of Commons or before a parliamentary committee? If so, when?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Standing Order and our precedents clearly indicate that a question may not be put to a minister if it concerns the administrative responsibility that he no longer holds.

Mr. Fortin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Lotbinière on a point of order.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I was expecting this position as I was sufficiently aware of the rules, but I wanted to demonstrate that the opposition has in fact no chance to cast light on the past activities of solicitors general as they often move to another position and as the present Solicitor General admits on page 4 of his statement, that people in this position do not know anything about their letters and their inquiries from the RCMP. Consequently, I direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Considering the unbelievable recognition by the present Solicitor General that it is customary for ministers not to inquire about investigations or claims made against the RCMP nor about the letters to be signed, can the Prime Minister tell us whether there is any direction from cabinet to put an end to this unusual practice where a responsible minister is eventually irresponsible?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member reads carefully the statement the Solicitor General made last Friday, he will see that the government already took, in fact, such measures more than two years ago. The problem the hon. member raises is real, namely how to take effective disciplinary measures when a citizen complains about the conduct of a member of the police force, while the

investigation is made by the force itself? It is because of this difficulty that the Solicitor General reminded the House last Friday that we established the Marin Commission more than two years ago to study this disciplinary problem and that we already took measures to prevent this inconsistency from recurring. Furthermore, the Solicitor General announced that this fall in the next session, we would introduce legislation to further prevent the claimant to be referred to the very police force which is the object of the complaint.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

I am sure the Prime Minister realizes how difficult it is for opposition members to address questions on activities arising from an old responsibility of the former solicitor general. So, given the difficulties that arise from questions which opposition members are entitled to ask on behalf of the Canadian people, would the Prime Minister, since all opposition parties are unanimous, agree to review his decision and allow such an inquiry so we might question the former solicitor general and have the matter cleared up?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, would this mean that the hon. member has no confidence in the inquiry which will be made by the government of the province of Quebec, which he usually defends?

● (1440)

[*English*]

BREAK-IN AT L'AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE—DATE MINISTER OF
SUPPLY AND SERVICES INFORMED PRIME MINISTER—
GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. It arises out of answers he has given to the Leader of the New Democratic Party and to my leader. It is evident from the refusal of the Minister of Supply and Services to answer any questions that it is very easy for the Prime Minister to move a minister out of a position when it gets hot, particularly when there is a question of a cover-up.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: In light of the fact that we have been denied any judicial inquiry, and in light of the statement made by the Prime Minister on June 2 last that no minister knew until several years after that the RCMP had been involved in the break-in, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a very definite, particular and concise question. If the Prime Minister does not remember the day, what year did he find out about this break-in, what year did the Minister of Supply and Services tell him about it and how many ministers knew about it?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the question was somewhat lengthy. I must indicate to the hon. member that the present Minister of Supply and Services has not refused to answer questions. Mr. Speaker has ruled that under our present rules he cannot answer.