

responsible journalists and responsible newspapers as to his relationship with the RCMP?

As part of that question, does the Acting Prime Minister, as the acting leader of the government today, feel that his colleague is discharging his duty as a minister by failing to take an opportunity to make a statement on motions as opposed to some other course of action? In other words, does the Acting Prime Minister not feel that it would be appropriate in these circumstances for this matter to be cleared up as soon as possible?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I said many times earlier in the question period that the minister is more than willing to testify before the McDonald Commission.

**Mr. Hees:** Several months from now.

**Mr. Chrétien:** I do not think that the security of the state or the police would gain anything by having these questions debated in the House. I think there has been enough of that kind of questioning and that it would be in the best interests of the nation to ask the McDonald Commission to look into this as quickly as possible and to report very soon to the House of Commons.

**An hon. Member:** In three years?

**Mr. Chrétien:** We think this kind of thing hurts a very good body of the Canadian public service, the RCMP, too much.

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### THE MINISTRY

#### MANNER IN WHICH MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS DISCHARGED—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, is it, then, the view of the Acting Prime Minister on behalf of this government that the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, which many of us think is in tatters, can be discharged by a minister going to a body outside this House of Commons and there answering allegations against himself? Is it the view of this government that that is the way to discharge ministerial responsibility?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, all questions with regard to these matters can be asked of the Solicitor General. I talked with the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at noon, and he referred to one incident which was debated publicly in this House.

**An hon. Member:** Let him speak.

**Mr. Chrétien:** I think the fact that the matter comes up two or three years later does not change the substance of what happened, so I have nothing else to add at this time.

### Oral Questions

#### POSSIBILITY OF FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL APPEARING BEFORE COMMITTEE

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Would the minister be prepared to clear up this very serious matter—very serious charges have been made by the minister—by appearing before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates when that committee has before it a supplementary estimate dealing with the Department of the Solicitor General so that this matter can be clarified by the House?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. That is a matter which can be taken up when the committee is in session, and I do not think it is a question which can be put to this minister in his current capacity.

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### INCOME TAX

#### BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF TAX RETURNS— GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question arising from the question put by the right hon. member for Prince Albert. The Minister of National Revenue seemed to treat this matter very lightly. I would like to know to what office Pierre Berton and Charles Templeton were referring and whether that office is under some degree of surveillance. What is being done to protect confidentiality?

**Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I did refer to security in my previous answer. With regard to the comments made by the right hon. gentleman concerning two well-known and good Canadians, Charles Templeton and Pierre Berton, I hope they will fully co-operate with the investigation taking place so that we can get to the bottom of this very serious matter. I should like also to say I am rather puzzled and surprised that the Leader of the Opposition did not contact the RCMP. Why did he not contact my department or myself to see what we could do? I want also to request his co-operation as well as that of members of his party who know something about it so that we can get to the bottom of it?

● (1502)

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I have never heard such verbiage. I asked a simple question and I will put it very simply again. What office disclosed that information? Surely that question can be answered yes or no without the minister reading from a memorandum from his department.

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** When I know that, Mr. Speaker, I will let you know and also the hon. member.