the Hon. Flora MacDonald when she was the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I should say that is a decision under appeal and the Government of Canada has been granted leave to appeal that particular case. The finding in that case was that a Minister was responsible for certain of the actions or failures to act of an official.

However, the point here is that we are not talking about the action of an official. We are not talking about the failure to act of an official. We are talking about an action that occurred when someone took a document and deliberately conveyed it to a journalist, for reasons known at this stage only to that individual. We are not talking here of officials. We are not talking here of a Minister himself. We are talking here of a thief. That is how this document came into the public domain. Somebody stole it.

Mr. Gauthier: How do you know?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I ask Members of the House to consider whether they are really interested in anything other than simple partisan advantage and making a debate for a day. If they are interested in the principle that is at stake here with respect to ministerial responsibility, they should ask themselves whether it makes sense to suggest that a Minister of the Crown is responsible for actions that occur to that Minister's Department as a result of a thief. Is a Minister of the Crown responsible—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa Vanier rises on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: The Minister has just contradicted himself. In 1983, on page 2462—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa Vanier cannot rise on a point of order. He will have later an opportunity to rise. Debate. The Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs has the floor.

[*English*]

Mr. Marchi: What did the Federal Court say on your Department, Joe?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) has just asked about the court decision to which I referred. Perhaps he was absent from his seat, or perhaps he was absent in his seat when I mentioned that.

It would certainly be a perversion of ministerial responsibility to claim that a Minister is responsible for the actions of a thief.

Let me suggest a parallel. The other day, many Members of the House were concerned with allegations made by one of our colleagues, the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), that there had been a break-in in the office of the Hon. Member for Skeena.

Ms. Copps: Is this a break-in?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That is now under investigation by officials of the House as to whether or not there was that type of break-in. I ask the House, should the Member for Skeena be asked to resign because someone broke into his office? That is precisely the logic the opposition is proposing here. Members opposite are suggesting that because there has been a document stolen from—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East.

Ms. Copps: The Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) talks about a break-in. Is he suggesting that the office of the Finance Minister (Mr. Wilson) was broken into? If that is the case, could he please clarify?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

On debate, the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The point to be made is the principle that many of us have accepted through time and the unreality of the suggestion that the Member for Skeena should be held liable for a break-in into his office applies as strongly to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson).

Ms. Copps: There was no break-in in your case.

Mr. Crosbie: Somebody broke into the Budget, girl!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Minister should not be held responsible for a theft.

I make the point, Mr. Speaker, that this doctrine is more than ludicrous. If Members of the House are seriously interested in looking at this problem, they would have to examine the consequences of having the Speaker find that a Minister of Finance, or indeed any