

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: It is possible to answer questions which are accepted by the Chair as being in order. The hon. member's question is not in order.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, following up the question asked by my seatmate, I ask the Solicitor General whether in committee he made a statement supporting the statement made by the former solicitor general with respect to vacating criminal records, and whether this is not now government policy?

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am glad of the opportunity to clear up this matter. In the committee dealing with the estimates of the department a question was asked about a private member's bill entitled "The expunging of criminal records", and I said that I did not think legislation in that form would be brought forward; I was not prepared to bring it forward in that form. But I went on to say that there were other methods of dealing with this subject, and I referred to the question of general pardons and the incidental striking off or limiting of the use of criminal records in connection therewith and said that I would bring before the committee at a later hearing full information as to the government's position on the matter. Regrettably, in the meantime hon. members, without having before them the committee evidence which is not yet available, have jumped to conclusions and misinterpreted what has been said. When the statement is made I would be very glad to have it widely distributed.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I ask the minister whether he supports the contention outlined in a memorandum to the previous cabinet, of which he was a member, in which the then solicitor general referred to the matter in this way:

—yesterday I affixed my signature to a memorandum to my cabinet colleagues—

That was a memorandum in connection with vacating criminal records. The then solicitor general went on to say that he hoped to introduce a government bill—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think the hon. member and the minister are getting into a debate and I suggest that the matter cannot be continued much further.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): A supplementary question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. I would ask [Mr. Nielsen.]

the Prime Minister, are we still dealing with the idiots of the past?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, we are.

An hon. Member: How do you know where they are?

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): We know where they are.

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, I was the member who asked the Solicitor General a question in the standing committee on justice and legal affairs with regard to the expunging of criminal records. Although I did refer to the bill sponsored by a member of the government, the then hon. member for Welland, I more particularly referred to the memorandum of the then solicitor general who said he had presented a memorandum to the cabinet for consideration and action.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what question is involved in that statement, but as I indicated a few moments—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

DOMINION-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS**FEDERAL GRANTS TO PROVINCES WITH PATIENT PARTICIPATION IN WELFARE PROGRAMS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Does the government intend to remove the discrimination in the matter of federal grants to those provinces which have patient participation in various social welfare programs?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am sorry, Mr. Speaker; I was talking to the Solicitor General and did not get the question.

Mr. Ritchie: Does the government intend to remove the discrimination in the matter of federal grants to those provinces which have patient participation in various social welfare programs?

Mr. Trudeau: I am not aware of the discrimination that the hon. member is talking about, Mr. Speaker.

AIR CANADA**EDMONTON—COMPLAINTS RESPECTING REVISED WINTER SCHEDULE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): In the absence of the Minister of Transport,