

Oral Questions

face of it looks like a criminal conspiracy against the administration of justice?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I think I also said in my statement concerning the police officers that RCMP headquarters staunchly believed an inquiry was being conducted at that time by the Montreal urban community police. I note that the Quebec inquiry, appointed by the Attorney General of Quebec, is seeking to determine specifically why that formal inquiry came to an end. As for the hon. member's specific question, I am still pursuing discussions with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Brewin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Solicitor General assure the House that as soon as he has come to a conclusion following these discussions with the Prime Minister, he will tell the House what the result is?

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, it has always been my custom and habit, as it has of all members of the government, to inform the House of all pertinent and relevant matters. When the question is raised again, I will do that.

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● (1500)

HEALTH**ALLEGEDLY DEFECTIVE MEDICAL DEVICES—GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It is not often that the minister publicly outlines the inadequacy of the policies of his own department. In a speech dealing with medical devices, he did that a few days ago. Will the Minister of National Health and Welfare confirm what he is reported to have said, that he finds the high proportion of defects in medical devices being used in Canada frightening. If so, can he explain to the House why he, as the minister responsible for public health in this country, has allowed such a deplorable situation to develop?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am Minister of National Health and Welfare precisely to ensure that the citizens of Canada will have not only medication, but also medical instruments of all kinds, whose safety is guaranteed. Now, I should like to remind the hon. member that Canada was the first country in the world to adopt rules requiring the Department of Health to check all medical instruments and devices used in treating patients in Canada. Under those regulations, we received hundreds of thousands of applications for approval of various equipment. We started to check that equipment and found out that quite a number of them were defective. I must say to the hon. member that, in that field, Canada leads the way, ahead of most countries in the world. I am very proud of the fact that my officials have done an excellent job in that regard.

[Mr. Brewin.]

[English]

Mr. Yewchuk: The minister has indicated that the number of hazardous products or products of this kind recalled because of defects was as high as 35 per cent in 1976. In his own words, he indicated that we have just barely scratched the surface. Will he now tell us whether we can now look forward to a continuing increase in the number of faulty devices marketed in this country or whether he will now take his responsibility to protect the public interest in this area a little more seriously and take immediate steps to correct this very high proportion of inadequate medical devices.

Mr. Lalonde: As I said before, Mr. Speaker, Canada is a world leader in this regard. We have now received applications for over 100,000 different products manufactured by some 1,500 concerns. We are speeding up the consideration of these various products, but there is no way 100,000 products are going to be verified during the course of this year or even next year. We are concentrating on areas where we are most likely to find deficiencies in order to ensure the protection of the public. Once again, Canada is a leader in this regard and we are proud of it.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE**MR. GOYER—ALLEGED BREAK-IN AT L'AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE**

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Solicitor General of Canada (Mr. Fox) made a statement to the House concerning the illegal search of the premises occupied by L'Agence de Presse Libre du Québec, le Mouvement pour la défense des prisonniers politiques du Québec and la Coopérative des déménageurs du 1^{er} mai. The Solicitor General's statement was very detailed, clear and precise and as far as I am concerned, I fully agree with its content. Personally, I would have preferred that the House would let it go at that.

Nevertheless, it happens that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) expressed some doubts inside and outside the House about the credibility of my explanations on the role I played in this incident. Therefore, I want to reply to him. The leader of the opposition should take note that I consider this statement as being made under oath, the oath I have taken as a member of parliament and as minister of the Crown. I also add that I am prepared to stake my seat in support of my statement and I trust that if a member questions it, he will have the courage to make precise charges and also stake his own seat.

[English]

Let me first address myself to the question of whether or not I had any prior knowledge of the October 6-7, 1972, break-in at the APLQ. My answer to that question is a flat no. The Solicitor General's statement in the House made it clear that neither the RCMP headquarters in Ottawa nor the command-