

Oral Questions

government, is in the hands of provincial attorneys general. I have brought the information to the attention of the proper law enforcement authorities.

**BREAK-IN AT PRAXIS CORPORATION—REASON ALLEGEDLY
GUILTY PERSON NOT PROSECUTED**

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): I am encouraged by the minister's answer. It is not my intention to release or make public in the House today the names of the persons I discussed at the meeting yesterday. But it is widely reported that Inspector Venner of the RCMP who, on behalf of the force, communicated with officials of Praxis after the exposure of the EPO list, could not reveal the source of the evidence which was used by the former solicitor general as the basis for his EPO letter for the reason that the life of the agent through whom the RCMP obtained the evidence was in danger. Since there is sufficient evidence that this agent was also the thief and arsonist, does the minister intend to investigate this aspect of the case and establish for the public record on what basis this person or group of persons was, and still is, granted total immunity from the law?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): My recollection of the matter, subject to verification, is that the identity of the person who handed over the material to the RCMP and whose life at that point was judged to have been in danger should his name have been publicly revealed was, indeed, brought to the attention of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department in order to enable them to fulfil their investigation in accordance with the normal course of enforcing the Criminal Code in this country.

**ALLEGED BREAK-INS BY MEMBERS OF FORCE—REQUEST FOR
PUBLIC INVESTIGATION**

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): A final supplementary question. It is important to the House to know today that the minister is not merely using the information I gave him yesterday to stonewall this matter further. I should like to ask him whether, in light of what he has learned now and the events that have occurred in Montreal, he is reconsidering or recommending to the Prime Minister to reconsider their previous stand as to the initiation of a judicial or federal inquiry into this whole matter.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I think one thing which seems to have escaped the attention of the hon. member and of other hon. members on that side of the House is that, whether there is a judicial inquiry at the federal level, there is nothing to prevent a province fulfilling its responsibilities so far as the administration of justice is concerned and holding its own judicial inquiry.

So far as the break-in in the Toronto area is concerned, I really wonder whether the opposition is now taking the position that the federal government, as a new matter of policy, should pre-empt the provinces in the field of administration and enforcement of the Criminal Code. If this is a new

[Mr. Fox.]

proposition which is being advanced by the opposition in the course of debate, it is an interesting one but one that ought to be rejected. The administration of justice in this country has always been the prerogative of the provincial attorneys general, and it is indeed an outstanding proposition to hear members on the other side say that is ought not to be so.

**ALLEGED DESTRUCTION OF FILES—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE
ONLY NARCOTICS DESTROYED**

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question with respect to the information that I brought to the Solicitor General's attention yesterday. Now it appears that indeed there were materials incinerated, which I understand are now alleged to have been narcotics only. Can the Solicitor General indicate to me whether he has actually seen the documentation authorizing, or the manifest dealing with, this material that was destroyed and whether he is satisfied now that there was nothing else but drugs incinerated in the very impressive looking furnace that we saw last night.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am, of course, delighted to hear the hon. member now qualifying and protecting his position, following the very serious allegations that he made.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Remember he still has a supplementary; you had better be careful.

Mr. Fox: To answer to the hon. member's question, I think he would wish to join me in commending the force on their very successful operations in the drug field. I wish to report that there were indeed two cases of incineration during the course of the month of June. The hon. member referred to one yesterday. There was a case of incineration on June 2 when 800,000 grams of hashish and two pounds of other drugs were destroyed in the Westmount incinerator in the presence of inspectors from national health and welfare. I understand that the market value of those drugs was somewhere in the vicinity of \$12 million, which is surely another indication of the high quality of work which the force does offer Canadians right across this land, including the province of Quebec.

I had the matter of the destruction of files investigated and it is reported to me that on June 3, 1977 there was 20 linear feet of files incinerated, also in the Westmount incinerator. All of these files were from the specialized sector of the force.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fox: Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member raised a very serious question and I would appreciate it if I were given the opportunity to reply to it. The material which was destroyed was strictly on the criminal investigations side. It was destroyed following a report which had been made on May 23 of this year by the divisional audit officer of the RCMP who, having gone through "C" Division in Montreal, made a number of recommendations to the commanding offi-