

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

General when the letter was brought to his attention, and when he had a conference with the Secretary of State in this regard? I am referring to the letter to which the right hon. member for Prince Albert referred a moment ago.

**Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, the subject matter of the letter was communicated to me immediately after the discussion between the Prime Minister and Mr. Saulnier took place, referred to in the Prime Minister's answer last week in the House of Commons. After that took place there were many discussions between the Secretary of State and myself on this subject, and all relevant information that would have a bearing on the matter was communicated to him by me and from him any that he had to me. Those conversations started immediately after the conference referred to by the Prime Minister and after he reported it to me.

**An hon. Member:** And vice-versa.

**Mr. Woolliams:** I am most interested in the Solicitor General's reply. When did he have a conversation with the Secretary of State and communicate it to the Prime Minister, if it was so important? I see the Prime Minister whispering to the minister, filling him in.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Does the minister suggest that he now remembers the letter and the fact that its contents were communicated to the Secretary of State right after the letter was received, although for the last couple of days there has been nothing but silence on the part of the government in regard to this important matter?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Perhaps the Solicitor General should be allowed to reply. Hon. members will recognize that considerable leniency has been allowed in the asking of these questions. This is the question period, not the cross-examination period—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Speaker:** —but in view of the general interest in the matter raised by these questions I thought some leniency should be exercised and that the ministers questioned should be given an opportunity to reply. That is why I would allow the Solicitor General to reply to the last question.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

**Mr. McIlraith:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you for permitting me to answer this question by the right hon. gentleman. The right hon. gentleman, if he had listened to the answers—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Which answer?

**Mr. McIlraith:** —I gave, would have noted carefully that I spoke of the subject matter that was in the letter. I did not see the letter nor did I know of it at that time, but the subject matter was disclosed to me at the time of the interview.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** By whom?

**Mr. McIlraith:** By the Prime Minister of this country, who is very careful about these things.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McIlraith:** And it was communicated to me right after the discussions between Mr. Saulnier and the Prime Minister in Montreal. As I indicated to the House last week in answer to a question, I did not see the letter—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Methinks you do protest too much.

**Mr. McIlraith:** —but I saw the letter on Friday afternoon.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

### CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE— STATEMENT BY JAMES EAYRES

**Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey):** I have a question for the Minister of National Defence which arises out of his recent statement that Canada's role in chemical warfare is strictly one of defence. In his absence may I ask his Parliamentary Secretary to take notice of the question. Has the minister's attention been drawn to a statement reportedly made by Mr. James Eayres, Professor of International Relations at the University of Toronto, to the effect that Canada has always opened her gas chambers and germ tunnels at Suffield, Alberta, to British and U.S. establishments and that Canada's role has been one of "reckless hospitality"?