

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the hon. minister rising on a question of privilege?

Mr. Goyer: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I merely wish to point out that no over-all accusation of this sort may be brought, for this would truly amount to irresponsibility towards a department of the government. If the hon. member has a specific case in mind, he should spell it out and I will gladly have it investigated properly.

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will recognize the hon. member but perhaps we should move on. This is the third question of privilege we have had on the same matter. The hon. member rose on a question of privilege. The minister raised a second question of privilege and now we have a third. The Chair will recognize the hon. member in view of the importance of this matter, but we should try to make progress.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear to Your Honour, to the Solicitor General and to other members of the House that I did not indicate that it has now become the practice of the RCMP to give extensive security coverage to public meetings in which members of this House and civic figures may happen to participate.

KEEPING OF DOSSIERS ON MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, so important is this matter to the independence of Parliament that the minister, now having opened the door as far as he has, must let this House know whether or not the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have dossiers on Members of Parliament. This is something that cannot be cleared up by evasive answers. Dossiers are the first step toward the control of the independence of parliament. Will the minister give his unequivocal answer that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for whom he speaks in this House, have not, and are not continuing to have, dossiers on Members of Parliament? Let that be clear and let the House have the answer.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police enjoys the greatest respect from Parliament and I do not think that Parliament as such has grounds for complaint about the methods used by the RCMP. Some individuals may have such grounds, and I am still waiting for specific complaints to be made.

Now, I find no provision in the law—and if there is, I should very much like to be enlightened about it—to the effect that members of Parliament are not also citizens, that they enjoy complete immunity and that they can do

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anything. If the House wishes to pass such a provision, the people will think that hon. members constitute a special category of citizens in this country.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I must ask a supplementary question since the last answer is worse than the first.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the right hon. gentleman in a moment, but I suggest to hon. members that there is not much point at this time in having this very important matter develop into a debate. This is still the question period. For the time being, the Chair will recognize the right hon. gentleman who has a supplementary.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, there is no debate. I asked the minister the simple question: Are there dossiers on Members of Parliament? Members do not expect to be treated differently from anybody else, but Members of Parliament have the right to know whether this government has launched upon a system of looking into the lives of individuals through the Mounted Police.

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I said that the department applied no general policy in this respect, and I might add that for the time that I have been Solicitor General, I have not seen the file of any member.

[English]

Mr. Baldwin: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The statement that has just been made and the failure of the minister to answer adequately have left a very bad situation in this House. This is a breach of privilege. I will not bother Your Honour at this time with a review of the privileges of members of this House. I am not referring to privileges in addition to those to which all citizens are entitled but specifically to the privileges of Members of Parliament. The issue raised is the extent to which these privileges are being infringed. I would therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald):

That the whole question of the statement by Premier Campbell regarding dossiers on M.P.'s be referred to a parliamentary committee.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Of course the hon. member realizes that he cannot make this kind of motion without first establishing that there is a question of privilege.

Mr. Baldwin: I recognize that, Your Honour.

Mr. Speaker: The matter would have to be considered. The hon. member has sent a piece of paper to the Chair which indicates that he wishes to have this very important matter referred to a committee of the House. If the matter raised is that important, the hon. member would be the first to recognize that it would have to be consid-