

the law, or of having in my possession in an unauthorized manner certain documents, or having in my possession stolen documents—”

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Allegedly stolen.

Mr. MacEachen: —they are saying that in such circumstances they would be pressed to the limit. The citizens of Canada are watching the House of Commons. They are watching the government, and they are asking the government to deal with this matter in a just way.

Some hon. members are suggesting that the government is acting in order to persecute the hon. member for Leeds. That is a canard, a disreputable argument. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite, that we do not regard the hon. member for Leeds as being any formidable threat to the government or to the Liberal party. But we do believe that the fact he is in possession—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It is an allegation and you know it!

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member concerned has made it clear in this Chamber that he has. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) has only to look at what has been said by the hon. member for Leeds. He will find he has made it very clear that he has in his possession material which the security service of Canada has advised the government has been taken from, or is sourced in, security documents. No one has contested that, not even the hon. member for Leeds.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. MacEachen: Let me put the argument in another way. If hon. members opposite find that line of argument unappealing, may I draw attention to the fact that it was the assistant commissioner of the RCMP, not the government, who went to the office of the hon. member for Leeds and asked him to co-operate with the police and return the documents in his possession.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: And he answered that request in this House.

Mr. MacEachen: It was not the government. Hon. members may say this was a political move. It should be apparent to the opposition that the reason the assistant commissioner accompanied the Solicitor General was to underline that this was not a political matter but a security matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: That is abundantly clear. Why was it important to secure that document? Obviously it was important to the police, to the security service, to trace the source of the leak. Obviously somebody with access to a highly sensitive document had broken his obligation to Canada and has made it available in an unauthorized way. Surely it was reasonable that the Solicitor General and the assistant commissioner should go to the hon. member for Leeds and say, “Will you

please co-operate with the police in a matter affecting the security of Canada and give us that document so that we may preserve its contents and, if possible, find out who is the bad apple who is giving out this measure of comfort to the enemies of Canada?”

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: Let us talk about privilege, but let us also talk about responsibility.

Mr. Nowlan: Hogwash!

Mr. MacEachen: I suggest that the responsibility of a member of parliament with respect to security is absolute. It is nothing short of that. Do not think for a moment that this matter is ended. This matter will be of great interest to the people of Canada. It will be of great interest to them as they adjudicate the attitude not only of the hon. member for Leeds but of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark).

Mr. Nowlan: You are a great actor, Allan. You should have gone on the stage!

Mr. Speaker: Order. I should like to be permitted to hear the argument which is being put forward as I have heard the other arguments which were put forward.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: I have not very much more to say except that this is a matter which will not end today. It is one which will be of great interest to members of parliament and to the public because they will ask: what are the obligations of a citizen? What are the obligations of a member of parliament when asked by the police to co-operate in a security matter and to return a document? What is the responsibility of even the lowest among us, let alone a member of parliament? They will ask these questions. They will ask: what is the responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition in a situation of this kind when he was appealed to for assistance by the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau), who is the man primarily responsible for the security of this country?

Hon. members opposite may say: we are doing this because, you know, we are afraid; we are doing this because of the security of the Liberal Party. That is what the hon. member for Calgary North says. He knows, deep down, that that view is very foolish. I have a great deal of respect for the hon. member for Calgary North. He knows that that is just a debating point. He knows that the assistant commissioner of the RCMP could not be moved to take the action he did unless he was convinced this was a serious security matter. He knows that if the RCMP deserve the commendation they receive from the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), as I believe they do, then surely, when they obtain a search warrant and put it into effect, they are not doing so for frivolous reasons but because they believe there is a matter which must be investigated, a matter which cannot be allowed to peter out without some conclusion.