

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

INQUIRY WHETHER HEALTH MINISTER MADE CERTAIN STATEMENTS

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I am not referring to the question of privilege, but in fact to the statement she is reported to have made before students. My question is quite clear. Could the minister advise the House whether she has actually said that the security services had acted stupidly in connection with the stolen list, unrealistically in connection with the fire, adding that these services are so powerful that they can do as they please at any time?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, I intend to deal more specifically with this matter when I rise on a question of privilege at three o'clock. The hon. member is inquiring about a discussion which took place during a lunch break at Carleton University some eight days ago, which lasted for an hour and a half, and of which the recorded tape I do not have. I shall deal more fully and completely with this issue in a little while.

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[English]

POST OFFICE

ALLEGATION BY MEMBER OF TAMPERING WITH HIS MAIL

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Postmaster General. In view of his replies to the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and to the hon. member for Brandon-Souris I should like to ask one simple question. Why is he permitting the security service to tamper with my mail?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, with reference to the hon. gentleman, I understand that he was in communication with the press this morning and he gave some background details of that particular intervention. As I understand it his letter was addressed to—or a letter was addressed to the hon. gentleman at his House of Commons address. Unfortunately, through some error—undoubtedly not an error in the post office—it was misdirected to Government House. At that point, as I understand it, the hon. gentleman has said it was opened at Government House. This is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, but if that is not the case I stand to be corrected. In any event, it is a particular instance. I would need, evidently, some additional information from the hon. member if he is to expect an adequate reply.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. At no time did I indicate the letter was opened at Government House. For the information of this House the letter was clearly addressed to me as a member of parliament and stamped by Government House as well as by the technical unit of the RCMP. I should like to ask the Postmaster General, in view of

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the fact that under the Post Office Act every person is guilty of an indictable offence who unlawfully opens letters or articles of mail, why was a letter, if the first answer was correct that it was done in error—why was a letter containing a simple request opened and inspected as stamped August 9, 1977 and August 10, 1977, a process which, I am told, is in effect since 1972? Why was this course followed?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, again it is a specific instance—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais: Surely the hon. members cannot expect me to provide them with a reply on something that it has taken him two shots at posing a question to me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais: There are things I cannot be expected to know. Evidently the question asked indicates there are details that need further investigation. I undertook to the hon. gentleman to provide that additional investigation and provide him as well as other members with a complete explanation of the incident.

ALLEGATION BY MEMBER OF TAMPERING WITH HIS MAIL

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise on a question to the Postmaster General. They may think this very amusing on the other side, but I, too, have a letter that was addressed to my office and was inspected by the RCMP on August 18, 1977. I want to know why my mail was tampered with?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think there is a temptation here to relate specific incidents. I have given some latitude to raising these in the general context. However, we have to carefully avoid the use of the question period to explore specific questions of this sort particularly if they have been outstanding for sometime as they appear to be.

An hon. Member: He is a slow reader.

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● (1442)

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING FAMILY ALLOWANCE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the President of the Treasury Board.

Yesterday I asked him, as reported in *Hansard* on page 632, if the minister could enlarge on the statement he made in September 1977 to the effect that he was going to decrease family allowances but he replied that he had made no such statement.