

that affair—the incredible incompetence of the then Solicitor General—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. If the hon. member wants to ask a question, he should put it now.

**Mr. La Salle:** If so, why has the right hon. Prime Minister refused until now to take action against those who were responsible in the Solicitor General's office at that time?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the feigned or assumed indignation of the hon. member for Joliette seems to be based on ignorance, wilful or not, of the facts. When he asks why we did not take specific steps, I say we did as soon as we learned that, in fact, there had been illegal acts. We have repeated that perhaps a hundred times to the House in the last few days. Is it that the hon. member was not in the House? One thing must be remembered, however, and I shall sum up the debate in a few sentences for the benefit of the hon. member. As soon as the government learned that a legitimate and democratic Canadian political party was under systematic surveillance, we asked immediately that a stop be put to it. And as soon as we learned that the surveillance was being conducted by what may have been illegal means, we referred the matter to the department of justice of the province of Quebec leaving it to them to decide whether they should take legal action or not.

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER ON L'AGENCE  
DE PRESSE LIBRE BREAK-IN

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Prime Minister goes on repeating the government were not aware of what was going on. I put the question because the Canadian people have reservations about that. Therefore, and since the current Solicitor General is forced to take the blame for his predecessor's incompetence, I put the question to the Prime Minister in the public's interest, because it is important in my view that the Canadian people be reassured. I ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether he is prepared to make a statement as early as next week, giving the Canadian people the real reasons for that break-in in the context of circumstances then prevailing, or whether he prefers attempting to save the Solicitor General's predecessors?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, once again that answer has been given a number of times, but I will repeat it for the hon. member's benefit. This government's policy is that there should be no intervention in the day-to-day operations of the RCMP as far as security is concerned. That is our policy. We, certain ministers and myself, are briefed on a regular basis on certain security matters involving Canada's security or possible terrorist or subversive action, in a general manner, but we have never felt it our duty—and I think this was also true of the former Prime Minister—Mr. Diefenbaker, to my knowledge no Prime Minister ever asked to intervene in the management of the RCMP's day-to-day operations, because in so doing we, as a government, as politicians, would get information on people

*Oral Questions*

investigated by the RCMP. We have no wish to so intervene in police operations, because we feel that civil liberties as we understand them would be harmed if the government of the day asked the police to open all their files to politicians in government.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION OF PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** I wish to ask another supplementary question.

I understand that the arguments put forth by the right hon. Prime Minister are interesting, that in the context of 1973, I think the Prime Minister must grasp the full scope of this question, in the political climate which existed then. Could the Prime Minister undertake to tell the House, given the type of information he must have been getting from the security service, what were the true reasons which led that service to investigate the membership list of the Parti Québécois? And the Prime Minister knows quite well what I mean, when one just looks at the situation in which the provincial Liberal government of the time found itself.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I already gave those reasons to the hon. member for Halifax a moment ago. I am quite prepared to repeat them for the benefit of the hon. member for Joliette. The hon. member will perhaps remember that before the October crisis of 1970, there had been various acts of violence, subversion, banditry and explosions. There was an assassination and various actions committed in the name of Quebec separatism by an organization calling itself the FLQ.

**Mr. La Salle:** The FLQ members were not separatists!

● (1452)

**Mr. Trudeau:** We are now learning from the member for Joliette that the FLQ members were not separatists. Of course I may not be an expert in the FLQ, I may not have the expertise of the hon. member in such matters—

**Mr. La Salle:** You know it too well.

[English]

REASON FOR FAILURE TO REQUEST MINISTER'S RESIGNATION  
IN VIEW OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OF FORCE

**Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Given the fact that the fundamental foundation of our parliamentary system is Cabinet responsibility—probably there is no more heinous crime against the state than illegal activity on the part of a state police force—why did the Prime Minister not ask for the resignation from the ministry of the responsible Cabinet minister at the time the illegal acts were brought to their attention?

**An hon. Member:** A friend of the Prime Minister's, that is why.