

**Some hon. Members:** Shut up.

**Mr. Alexander:** You do not make any speeches. You like to talk from your seat.

**Some hon. Members:** Order, order.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I was about to say that I had no intention of getting into the debate on what I regarded initially as a very serious question of privilege raised by the official opposition, until the Prime Minister, with his all too characteristic buffoonery, decided to rise on this issue. Historians and serious political journalists 5, 10 or 15 years down the road, will look at this as one of the most important events in Canadian history.

I want to deal with the substance of the Prime Minister's argument, because he said that the logic of the official opposition's position was somehow connected with unwarranted charges and that there was some kind of cover-up by this side of the House. The Prime Minister made the accusation that the Conservative party somehow planted a bug in its own offices. If one was vitiated, the other was: that was the logic of his argument.

● (1542)

I would like to deal with that matter. However, before I do I would like to deal with the substance, because my own reaction, as a Canadian and as a member of the opposition, when the accusation was made was one of serious disgust because it was made by the Prime Minister in the context of serious points which were being raised on this issue, an issue which brought down a government in the United States, I might add—and it was no frivolous matter there. A very serious accusation was being made by hon. members in this House about government involvement in a cover-up, and there are reasons to believe that, reasons with which I will deal.

In response, the Prime Minister one day throws off—off the top of his head—the idea of a referendum. Next he hurls a silly and frivolous accusation at the Leader of the Opposition and members of the opposition, that somehow they were planting bugs in their own offices. I do not know how anyone, when looking back on this period, will take this Prime Minister as anything but an uncaring buffoon for some ten years. I want to deal with the logic of his argument. With reference to me and other members of the opposition, he said that we were hurling serious accusations of a cover-up, presumably unsubstantiated.

I want to quote something for the Prime Minister. This was not said by a member on this side and not by a backbencher on his side of the House, but by one of his fellow cabinet ministers who is quoted in the press as saying she thinks the Prime Minister and the Solicitor General are dead wrong. She is quoted as saying they misrepresented reality, that they did not tell the truth about the RCMP, and that she, for one, flatly disagrees. The logic of her argument was that there was a cover-up involved. I mentioned a cover-up, and the Prime

*Privilege—Mr. Baldwin*

Minister mocked me; he said, "With seriousness the hon. leader of the NDP moved his motion". I did so with seriousness because it is a serious matter.

**Miss Bégin:** Mr. Speaker—

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Alexander:** He hasn't said anything yet.

**Mr. Broadbent:** On the issue of the cover-up, I want to quote this minister because I want to say something about the legitimacy of that accusation. She said, and I quote from the Carleton University press of a few days ago—

**An hon. Member:** Identify her.

**Mr. Broadbent:** The Minister of National Health and Welfare said she disagreed with the Prime Minister and the Solicitor General. She said:

As a Quebecer, there is no way anyone is going to tell me there was a threat to national unity in 1973—

So much for the red herring of both the Prime Minister and the Solicitor General. The article continues:

Bégin attacked Fox for not being honest with the Canadian public. "He should tell Canada he disagrees with the RCMP," she said.

Later on she is quoted as saying that the RCMP has grown so strong that the Trudeau government no longer has control.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** With reference to the RCMP, the minister said:

They're so big that if the ministers start trying to control them they wouldn't be able to.

My point is that what the Minister of National Health and Welfare is saying is that the Prime Minister and the Solicitor General have failed to control the RCMP. There was no lower level criticism here of junior members of the RCMP. There is, in fact, documentation to support the charge made by the official opposition and by ourselves over the past ten days that this government failed to exercise its ministerial responsibility. That is what is involved.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** That is why, Mr. Speaker, if I may just conclude—

**Mr. Speaker:** I want to follow the hon. member's argument. I understand he is making the argument that if a general allegation is substantiated, it is permitted; but if it is unsubstantiated, it is not. I am not following the relevance of the hon. member's argument on the question of privilege.

**Mr. Harquail:** It is pretty difficult.

**Mr. Broadbent:** We listened to curious twists of tortuous logic from the Prime Minister for 20 minutes. I will try to make my case very briefly and then sit down. The point I am