

RCMP

leagues, if no one else in the House of Commons or outside of it, that he had a splendid excuse for not being in the House today or tomorrow because he could claim that he had a previously arranged meeting with two premiers in western Canada. By the time he gets back to the House of Commons on Wednesday, the Prime Minister—and I mean this—no doubt calculated that the whole thing would be brushed aside with two days of skirmishing in the House of Commons, and he would escape scot-free.

Mr. Woolliams: Absolutely.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I ask, is this a man concerned with parliamentary tradition, not the spurious traditions but the traditions connected with the rule of law and with ministerial responsibility? Is this a man who has accepted the onerous moral responsibilities of being Prime Minister in this country? To ask the question under these circumstances is to answer it. It is clearly the situation that he has failed to accept the most elementary of moral responsibilities in these circumstances.

● (2042)

Additionally, I cannot in any way accept at face value the ingenious and imaginative answers the Prime Minister gave to journalists who questioned him on this matter last Friday afternoon. The Prime Minister said, when he first learned of the RCMP surveillance of the Parti Quebecois, and I quote the following gem, "Gee, we've got to stop this. We can't go on exercising surveillance on a democratic party". Well, gee whiz—

Mrs. Holt: Read the whole quote.

Mr. Broadbent: You will get your chance in a minute.

Mr. Allmand: There is more dishonesty in this House tonight than there has been in a whole year.

Mr. Broadbent: This alleged shock of the Prime Minister should convince no one on either side of the House. Why do I say that? I say it because of related statements concerning the same issue, and I ask the former solicitor general to read the record carefully himself and see if in all candor he can accept this bundle of contradictions.

What else did the Prime Minister say as reported in the *Globe and Mail* last Saturday? He said he could not recall whether it was in 1974 or 1975 that he first learned of this surveillance of a democratically constituted and democratically functioning political party in Canada, yet he was amazed and shocked. He also said he could not recall whether he was told at the time whether the RCMP had obtained a list of PQ memberships. The specific words attributed to the Prime Minister are as follows: "Maybe they," the RCMP, "did tell me". Well, maybe indeed they did, Mr. Speaker.

I simply cannot accept the contradictions implied in this series of assertions by the Prime Minister last Friday. If the Prime Minister was shocked and said, "Gee whiz, what is

[Mr. Broadbent.]

going on, this must stop", then surely he must remember the year. Surely he can remember whether he was told if the RCMP had a list of PQ members. If the shock is there, how could his memory suddenly disappear from related facts that are inextricably connected to such an alleged expression of shock?

If anyone can accept these contradictions—and I have my doubts if any impartial person could—I have another question. If we accept the contradictions there have been so far, how can we at the same time accept the next claim made by the Prime Minister that he did not under the circumstances ask the RCMP if its surveillance was all done within the framework of law? I find that an impossible situation.

Does the Prime Minister think that the RCMP got the list of members by telephoning the PQ and having the PQ voluntarily send it out? Does he think that the list of financial contributors was voluntarily provided by the PQ? Speaking for myself, I do not accept an affirmative answer to those questions in any sense. I say that only a man who did not want to know the answers would not have asked the questions under those circumstances, and only a Prime Minister who has failed in his moral obligations to the people of Canada would have failed to ask them. The same man is the Prime Minister who failed in his obligation to be here today to answer questions and to take part in the debate.

This situation is a sad one. It is a sad day for parliament and for Canada, and I hope that the historical results which may occur from it will not be as negative in the long run in the history of our country as they could possibly be.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, when the opposition moved for an emergency debate this evening, we on this side did not object to having that debate.

Mr. Alexander: What do you mean object? You had no choice whatsoever.

Mr. Fox: We hoped we would have an opportunity this evening to have a constructive debate. However, it seems quite clear from the type of remarks which have been made on the other side of the House that we can expect neither constructive debate nor respect for the facts as they actually exist and as they have been given to the House of Commons over the past few days. I say "constructive debate" because the matters we are talking about are matters which really go beyond partisan politics. They are matters which affect the national security of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fox: Not one word was mentioned this evening about the type of mandate which has been given to the security service of this country, and since hon. members seem to have overlooked it, I would like to mention it quite briefly. The security service of our country is involved with affairs regard-