

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

his opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister in answer to my earlier question about him or some other member of cabinet making a statement to the House regarding the way in which the Auditor General exceeded his jurisdiction have a negative answer. He said he would not do it. May I now ask the Prime Minister whether he would advise the President of the Treasury Board to appear before the Public Accounts Committee and give to that committee the basis on which he made his attack on the Auditor General?

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

**Mr. Lewis:** May I also ask the Prime Minister whether he would consider it right for the Auditor General to reply in kind, as in my opinion he has every right to do, to the President of the Treasury Board?

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

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has misinterpreted his own question. The question was whether I had the courage to do such a thing and my answer was that I did not answer this type of question.

**Mr. Lewis:** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Prime Minister, without any such adjective—I am not interested in playing games with him—

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

**Mr. Trudeau:** You like to play them alone.

**Mr. Lewis:** I say, Mr. Speaker, that I am not interested in playing games with the Prime Minister. I ask the Prime Minister whether he or the President of the Treasury Board or any other member of cabinet will make a statement either before the House or before the Public Accounts Committee indicating the ways in which they accuse the Auditor General of having exceeded the jurisdiction given him by Parliament?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know the need for this. The report of the Auditor General has already been referred to a committee of Parliament and, of course, if the committee wants to hear the President of the Privy Council or the President of the Treasury Board they can ask them to testify on this and other matters.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister and members of gov-  
[Mr. Speaker.]

ernment are putting their own interpretation on the scope of the duties of the Auditor General. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether it is not true that for some time the Auditor General has been pressing the government to introduce legislation to strengthen the office of the Auditor General and to define, presumably precisely, his duties? I should like to ask the Prime Minister why, instead of proceeding with this legislation, he and his ministers prefer to pick at the Auditor General and undermine his prestige and authority?

**Mr. Trudeau:** It is not a question of either/or, Mr. Speaker. We believe that we will be able to do both. We hope the legislation will be introduced before the end of this session.

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Justice. Has the Prime Minister or any other member of cabinet asked the Minister of Justice to have the legal officers check into the facts and law to see if the Auditor General has in fact and in law exceeded his jurisdiction as stated by the Prime Minister?

**Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, that is a fairly difficult question for me to answer under the rules.

**Mr. Hees:** You mean the rule whereby the Prime Minister says "shut up".

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. May we have order, please.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to reshape the question. I am not asking a question of law, and I ask the Minister of Justice to reconsider the question. Has the Prime Minister or any other member of the government asked the Minister of Justice to ask his legal officers to determine under the statute whether the Auditor General has exceeded his legal authority in the statements he made?

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** I would think, Mr. Speaker, that not only is the content of any advice of the law officers of the Crown given to the Prime Minister or any other minister of the Crown privileged, but perhaps it is also privileged as to whether that advice has been sought or given.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I quite understood the full import of the latter portion of the state-