

happens on the issue regarding the Official Secrets Act, we cannot leave uncontested and unchallenged the conduct of the Solicitor General and his minion whom he took with him in an attempt to intimidate and coerce the hon. member for Leeds into making statements and confessions, under the pretence and guise of being his friend. That is conduct which cannot be forgiven.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to be as brief as I can. I should like to make two points arising out of the contribution of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to this very important question of privilege, one of which I believe was important and well taken; the second of which I believe is specious and offensive. I will deal with the first one in a moment. The second one concerns the right hon. Prime Minister sitting in judgment on the patriotism of his colleagues in the House of Commons. That is completely offensive to any hon. member. I do not want to attribute to him any qualities of judgment which might put him in that exalted position.

The history giving rise to this debate started at least 10 or 11 days ago, I believe on February 21. If the assurances given to us today are true—and I doubt that—a vigilant and diligent Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) would have been warned that a very important document had apparently left the control of the security services at that time. The questions which were put in the House by the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Cossitt) over a period of days and weeks were not such as to embarrass the government because of a leaked document. They were such as to embarrass the government because, in the opinion of the hon. member for Leeds—and that opinion is shared by many—it was not diligent enough in enforcing security matters in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jarvis: There was no suggestion that the hon. member for Leeds, or any other member who was asking questions at that time, was embarrassing the government because there was a leak in the security services. The thrust of the questions was: get with it and do something, because assurances have been given in the House since last November, which the government has had to back up on time and time again.

When the minister responsible for inter-governmental affairs asks us to accept his assurance of the importance of this document, I will not accept it, because we have received assurances since last November which the government has backed down on.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: Don't you believe the RCMP?

Mr. Jarvis: I am not going to deal with the hon. minister any more. He is not worth it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Privilege

Some hon. Members: Right on!

Mr. Jarvis: The Prime Minister indicated quite well the choices that were available to the government. One choice was search and seizure or arrest. If anyone reads the act, he will see that choice was open to the government. The Prime Minister laid out that choice very well, and I accept that. The other choice was to solicit the co-operation of a member of the House. The Prime Minister's telephone call to the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) was well taken. It was incumbent upon him to do that, and I compliment him for it. With respect to the role of the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition having received that call, the Prime Minister pointed out the alternative. I believe the hon. leader of my party operated honourably in terms of discharging that responsibility.

I thought there was an alternative of going to Mr. Speaker and saying, "This is the problem. Will you act as arbitrator?". That was alluded to by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). That can be forgotten, and we can return to the other two alternatives: search and seizure or arrest on one hand, co-operation on the other. Where I quarrel with the Prime Minister is that he did not do either. He embarked on a fumbling, stupid expedition to the member's office, heavy handed, bullying intimidation.

● (1712)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jarvis: It was completely incompetent. Clearly he should have followed either of two choices. It may have given rise to a question of privilege, but not of the seriousness of the matter with which we are dealing today, nothing compared with it. A search warrant, of which Mr. Speaker may have been apprised, could have given rise to a question of privilege, and an effort to enlist co-operation in the ordinary manner could have—although it is not likely—given rise to a question of privilege. But that is not what happened, as the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) pointed out.

Into the hon. member's office came, first, the Solicitor General, second, the chief security officer of the Crown, and third, a document was brought showing what would happen in terms of choices available to the government if the hon. member did not co-operate. I use the word co-operate very loosely because that is not co-operation but, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Neilsen), it was intimidation of the clearest form. When the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) starts talking about the law, let me tell you that he now knows less about the law than he knows about transport, and that is rather remarkable because he knows nothing about transport.

Surely the Prime Minister must acknowledge, with respect to those two clear alternatives, that the mess in which we are now—and it is a serious one—is because he took neither choice. He did not take advantage of the right under the Official Secrets Act for search and seizure, nor did he solicit in