

the House in general terms the other day. He asserted it directly today, without naming the individual, in answers in the House today.

● (2032)

**Mr. Woolliams:** Right on.

**Mr. Broadbent:** What has to take place—and this is the unfortunate, serious aspect of that illegal activity, presumably by that individual—is the laying of criminal charges against all those involved. Historically—and I regret very much to have to say this—this means another sad chapter in the otherwise noble history of the RCMP in Canada.

The implications for Canada at this time are, of course, unfortunate in the extreme. The Parti Québécois is currently waging a battle, perhaps the most serious battle in the history of our country, for the hearts and minds of the people of the province of Quebec. The Parti Québécois is claiming that the only way that Quebecers can legitimately pursue their own best interests is in an independent state. In the context of this effort by the Parti Québécois we must keep in mind that that party is not only organized democratically but has obeyed fundamentally all the democratic norms of our country, and although we may fundamentally disagree with its objectives, as all of us in the House do, none of us has disagreed with the democratic procedures that it is using.

Among the arguments that they are making is that the federal Government of Canada has frequently and arbitrarily imposed its wishes and programs on the people of Quebec. My point in this circumstance is obvious. What could be more arbitrary, more wrong, and more unjust than a calculated, illegal break-in on their premises, not in the heat of crisis in 1973, as the minister and the Prime Minister would like to have us believe, but in the relatively calculated calm of 1973? What could be more injurious to the arguments put forward by federalists in the province of Quebec than to have a federal police force, the RCMP, doing such a calculated, evil act? What could give the Parti Québécois more legitimate concern than that it was done under the federal political direction than the fact that at this time the RCMP acted alone, they were not accompanied, as they were in 1972 in another break-in, by the Montreal police or by the provincial police of Quebec?

In that particular instance it was a break-in into the Parti Québécois office, a legitimate party in that province. The RCMP, a federal force, acted completely alone, unaccompanied, I repeat, by police forces from the province of Quebec. What kind of a weapon has the federal government now given to the Parti Québécois? This is a truly sad episode in the history of our country. This is truly an act of potentially tragic consequences for our people, and as such, whatever illegal course of action was taken by the RCMP on their own authority, the Liberal cabinet cannot escape its responsibility in this matter.

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

### RCMP

**Mr. Broadbent:** It is central to the whole history of the notion of ministerial responsibility that the politicians who hold the ultimate power also assume the ultimate responsibility.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** I say in this context that no spurious argument put up by the Prime Minister or the Solicitor General can obscure this important, democratic reality which, up to the present time, all of us in Canada have taken for granted. I want to say through, you Mr. Speaker, to the Solicitor General that this particular line of responsibility will be pursued in the House tomorrow, the next day, and the day after that, until we get some important matters clarified.

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** Now I want to turn directly to the Prime Minister's responsibility in this matter. I say that it is the Prime Minister and no one else who is responsible for the ultimate integrity of the cabinet. It is in him, whoever he may be at the time, that all the people of Canada must, in the crunch, have moral confidence. I regret to say that the grounds for that trust in the present Prime Minister have now been, in my view, completely shattered, and I will explain why.

First, during the judges' affair about two years ago, and then last spring during the first round of debates on the illegal activities of the RCMP, the Prime Minister indicated a willingness to condone moral slackness in his ministers, and to accept it even in his own behaviour. In both those situations there were unequivocally clear examples in which ministers of the Crown either committed a wrongdoing themselves, or, by simply refusing to ask the relevant question—known, I suggest, by any adolescent viewing the circumstances of the time—they ensured that they would not obtain personally implicating information.

Many Canadians were evidently prepared to accept this moral sloppiness last spring, and before that two years ago in the judges' affair. However, I ask you today, how many can accept the Prime Minister's performance in this sad affair? According to his own words, he learned of the 1973 break-in at least nine or ten days ago for the first time. Accepting this, at least for the moment for the argument, I want to ask the following question: did he then proceed to check out and verify what apparently was brought to his attention, and then immediately inform the House of Commons? Of course he did neither of these.

Quite deliberately, and there is no doubt at all about this in my mind, the information was withheld from all the members of parliament for all of last week. Then it was casually and cynically released on Friday in a routine speech by the Solicitor General in an otherwise routine debate. Carefully it was calculated that opposition members would not be able under the circumstances to assume their responsibilities in this system in which we live, by posing the relevant questions. The Prime Minister was not even present at the time, and I assume that he knew that he could convince at least his own col-