

Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Buchanan) made in a speech yesterday, that Canada lags far behind other industrialized countries in research and development, causing Canada to lose out on employment and trade opportunities, and that the minister puts much of the blame on the private sector, which provides only one-third of Canada's R and D effort, and points out that our branch plant system causes us to import 80 per cent of our technology, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow):

That this House instruct the minister to convince his colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, to stop using the Foreign Investment Review Agency as a "welcome wagon" and begin to restrict foreign ownership and its growth in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the presentation of such a motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The oral question period will continue until ten minutes past three.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

INDEMNIFICATION OF COURT COSTS OF MEMBERS OF FORCE

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Solicitor General. Is it the policy of the government that RCMP officers acting with the expressed or tacit approval of their superiors be protected or indemnified in the event that in the course of their duties they transgress the criminal law, civil law or common law, such indemnification to take the form of such things as payment of fines, legal fees, assurances of continued employment, and so on? Is that the policy of the government?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman undoubtedly is referring to matters that came out of the McDonald inquiry yesterday. The matters which he is addressing have been dealt with in that context. I can assure the hon. gentleman that this government has indicated in the past, and will continue to indicate, that it will not condone or tolerate any illegal act on the part of the RCMP, and it follows from that policy that indemnification is not forthcoming.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, in view of his answer that that is not the policy of his government, would the minister indicate to the House the date upon which that policy ceased to be effective, and which of the minister's predecessors was responsible; or did it cease since the hon. member became Solicitor General? Also, would the minister undertake to table in the

Oral Questions

House the directive by the Solicitor General ordering the cessation of that particular policy?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, that has never been the policy of this government.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General has referred to the events of the past 24 hours or more. Is the minister saying that he has not consulted with one or more of his predecessors, particularly in the last 24 hours, to determine the nature of that policy, who was aware of it, who approved it and who approved its continuance as government policy since 1970? Is the Solicitor General saying that he has had no consultation with either the Prime Minister or his predecessors to determine when that policy ceased to exist?

● (1427)

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I find it most unfair for the hon. gentleman to imply by his questions that any policy of this nature has been one of this government. I indicated to him, and my predecessor indicated previously, that there was not to be any carrying on of any illegal activity by the RCMP or any of its branches. That has been clearly defined, Mr. Speaker.

When there was any indication of questionable conduct on the part of the RCMP, those matters were raised and referred to an inquiry which is studying those matters at the present time. That is quite categorical, and we hold by what has been advanced in this House previously.

TESTIMONY BEFORE McDONALD COMMISSION

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. I am sure that all members of the House were under the misapprehension when I asked a question yesterday about documentation relating to ex-Commissioner Higgitt's testimony yesterday—all of us, including the Prime Minister, were under the misapprehension that no such documentation had been forthcoming. In actual fact, a memorandum was filed yesterday which reads in part:

You will be aware that certain tasks performed by SIB or CIB personnel require that the law be transgressed, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal law, in order that the purpose of the undertaking may be fulfilled.

There is no question there that members of the force would have to transgress the law. My question to the Prime Minister is simply this: because of ex-Commissioner Higgitt's very definite declaration that the principles and policies emanating from that memorandum were discussed by him with one minister, Mr. George McIlraith, with one Mr. John Turner who was then a minister, with the Minister of Supply and Services and the present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, would he reiterate, or state again for us that each of these ministers has denied to him that they had knowledge of or any discussion relating to the need for this policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not know yesterday, and I did not know today until this moment, that such a document was tabled by the commission