

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, one further supplementary. Given the importance of this and simply to get clarification from the Prime Minister, would he inform the House what in his view are the conditions necessary to induce this government to take some public action on this matter?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the answer to that could take 100 pages. There are all kinds of conditions—if the province of Ontario were unable to discharge its duties, if the attorney general of Ontario were unable to find facts, if the police were incompetent in finding facts. There are all kinds of reasons which might cause us to want to make a public inquiry. Surely, the hon. member cannot ask me to enumerate all the reasons in advance of something that might happen and what we would do if something happens.

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[Translation]

**ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE****REQUEST FOR FEDERAL AID TO QUEBEC POLICE FORCES—  
CONSULTATIONS WITH PROVINCE**

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Last night, on the national news bulletin of the CBC, I heard, like all those who were listening, that the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada is a hypocrite, a liar, that he is hiding behind the Solicitor General of Canada with regard to the claims of the province of Quebec on the use of the Quebec provincial police, for which the province is asking a federal contribution of some \$450 million. Since last night, or even before, has the Prime Minister been in touch with the Quebec Minister of Justice and could he tell us what progress has been made in those talks?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I shall first of all have to check to see if the allegations repeated by the Social Credit leader were in fact made over the CBC network. I know nothing of what was said but I shall look into the matter; I do hope the language used by the hon. member was not in fact used by a minister of the Crown.

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● (1440)

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE****RETIREMENT OF FOUR DEPUTY MINISTERS—USE OF MERIT  
PRINCIPLE IN APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSORS**

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. As the appointment and dismissal of deputy ministers comes under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, will the Prime Minister advise the House what he knows of the circumstances which caused four deputy ministers, two of whom are the most senior and important in the whole of the civil service, to decide simultaneously that

[Mr. Speaker.]

the atmosphere in which they are working is such that they prefer early retirement.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think the allegation as repeated by the hon. member is false.

**Mr. Hees:** Seeing the Prime Minister refuses to answer that straightforward question—

**Mr. Trudeau:** I said it is false.

**Mr. Hees:** Will the Prime Minister advise the House if the merit principle will prevail in the appointment of successors to these four deputy ministers who are resigning or will proximity to the Prime Minister be the overriding factor as the Prime Minister continues to supplant very able men by his own palace guard?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member is again misinformed. By order in council we appoint meritorious people. However, we do not follow the merit principle that applies to the Civil Service Act and not order in council appointments.

**Mr. Hees:** Will the Prime Minister then advise the House if the appointment of Mr. Michael Pitfield was simply on his own whim rather than following the merit principle.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, it was made because of his very great merit. I would not say as much about the merit of the person who was elected by the Prince Edward-Hastings electorate.

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**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE****REASON FOR DENIAL OF BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. It concerns the strike against the British Columbia Railway. Can the minister advise the House why the Unemployment Insurance Commission has refused to pay benefits to 2,000 workers who do not belong to the shopcraft unions that are on strike and who are not on strike themselves, but who are prepared to work and who are in fact laid off by the railway company?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I will inform myself of the details and report to the hon. member as soon as possible.

**Mr. Fraser:** Can the minister advise why an incident that took place before the present legal strike commenced on November 21 is being used as an excuse by the minister's officials in British Columbia to deny these 2,000 non-striking workers their benefits?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I presume the same answer will apply.

**Mr. Fraser:** A supplementary question.