

ultimately the consideration of the House. In the final analysis, and this has to be stressed as well, the decision is not up to the Chair in the final sense but up to the House.

I leave the matter with the hon. member on that basis but, on the grounds which I have stated, for the moment I must set aside the question of privilege.

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to express my thanks to Your Honour for the way in which you elucidated the problem with which we are faced. I will look at your comments in *Hansard*, and I reserve the right to bring another motion which is more in line with the explanation you gave to the House this afternoon.

● (1512)

MR. JARVIS—NATIONAL SECURITY—REFUSAL BY SOLICITOR GENERAL TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Your Honour will be well aware that over the past few days questions have been put to the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) which he has refused to answer. Up until today most of those questions related to specific events of alleged subversive activity. Today, however, I and others put questions not about specific events but about certain procedures for which the Solicitor General and his department are responsible. Today I put a question as to whether copies of a certain report were printed and distributed. The question related in no way to the contents of that report, nor did it refer to any individual incidents of alleged subversive activity.

Last Thursday on a question of privilege the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) contributed to a rather lengthy debate on this issue. In his intervention he referred to the contents of a particular document. With relation to that document he raised three matters which, in his view, were matters seriously affecting national security. The first of those was that foreign security services now know how our security service operates. The second was that the contents of the document involved would indicate sources of information and thus cause a situation whereby loyal Canadians would be reluctant to offer information in aid of our security service. Finally, the Prime Minister alleged that we were being judged by intelligence services of friendly countries, some of which we are closely associated with, such as our NATO allies.

In each of the three points raised by the Prime Minister the Prime Minister alleged that a particular security document would imperil our national security. By refusing to answer questions the Solicitor General has given support to all three points raised by the Prime Minister, but for the very opposite reason.

What the Solicitor General fails to realize is that it is not our security service which is being judged. The government and the department are responsible for the security service, and the government and the department are being judged.

The point I raise today—and I gave the Solicitor General an opportunity to negate this—is that reportedly 58 copies of a document are floating around Ottawa. We also gave the

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Solicitor General the opportunity to advise how many had been recovered. What has happened as a result of the refusal of the Solicitor General to answer questions? Why would foreign security services not know about our operations if there are 58 copies around? That has to do with the Prime Minister's first point.

Second, loyal Canadians want to give information but might be discouraged from doing so if they thought their names would be revealed. Why would they think their names would not be revealed if there are 58 copies around?

Finally, with regard to friendly countries judging our intelligence services and having a negative reaction, why would they not have a negative reaction if there are 58 copies floating around, unless the Solicitor General can assure the House that they have been recovered or that they never existed? The importance of all three of the Prime Minister's points is this: I gave the Solicitor General an opportunity today to state that the leak was not within our security service but within the Government of Canada or one of its departments. The minister refused to assure the House in that regard.

Your Honour will recall the events leading up to last February 6. The Solicitor General refused to answer questions on the ground that the matter being inquired about was before the McDonald Commission. That resulted in a very lengthy debate on questions of privilege, and on February 6, as recorded at page 2567 of *Hansard*, Your Honour said this:

I think I have exposed the difficulty and I hope I have made my thinking as clear as possible on decisions on which I really do not need any help from the standing committee. Therefore, I think the appropriate action for me to take would be to reserve my judgment on both these motions, not for one day but for several days, because I think I can be aided in my deliberations by determining, in the manner in which I described, exactly what the intentions of the minister are and what will be the reality. Therefore, I propose to set these motions aside for a few days and see what happens.

Those motions were proposed by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). In my view what happened on February 6 was that the Solicitor General was put on probation. I believe he has breached that probation, patently and obviously, today. In the interest of national security I therefore ask Your Honour to reconsider the events which led up to that decision on February 6.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. One needs only to have been here since last Thursday to know that a certain number of events have come to the fore and that certain allegations have been made. I have indicated to this House today that certain allegations are still under very active investigation. I did not comment on the questions asked of me today for the reason I set forward, namely, that the matters involved were under investigation, that they involved national security and that, in accordance with the traditions of this House, no comment is forthcoming. That is exactly the position I still maintain.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the question is not quite as simple as the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) puts it. Let me put it into perspective. As this matter