

ask whether he has received a report from a Mr. Cossette, chairman of a section of the St. Jean-Baptiste Society of Montreal, that his personal residence was bugged by an electronic device and, if so, what is he proposing to do about it?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I indeed received a wire from Mr. Cossette, which he had first sent to the Minister of Justice, and in reply I intend to point out to him that no Canadian law forbids such practices, as the hon. member knows. Naturally, the practices are open to anybody, police forces as well as private detective agencies and ordinary citizens. This means that anything goes.

As for this case, I shall simply say that the established practice in the House has been, for a long time, even when the right hon. member for Prince Albert was Prime Minister, to consider such matters as not in the public interest, which does not mean that my answer is either positive or negative.

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the minister. Has the Solicitor General ordered that the device be removed from the home of Mr. Cossette?

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, if someone loses a pencil in a house, I doubt that it is up to the federal government to go and find it. Now, as I have indicated, there is nothing illegal about the object in question, or any other for that matter, being in the possession of the government or an individual.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order. There are a number of supplementaries but I believe I should return first to the hon. member for Greenwood.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, in light of what the Solicitor General has told us, can he say whether the government is giving consideration to bringing in legislation which would make it illegal to instal these electronic listening devices in the private residences of citizens without a court order.

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that a committee of the House has looked into the question and submitted a report; the cabinet is now in the process of studying the matter.

[English]

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I do not intend to reply to the gratuitous falsehood expressed by the minister but I do intend to ask him a simple question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Did the Mounted Police plant a listening device in the home of Marcel Cossette? It is as simple as that.

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I merely wanted to remind the right hon. member that when he was Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice of the day used to answer exactly as I have done.

[English]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, these hypothetical statements do not in any way answer the question. The Solicitor General should be able to tell the House whether this was done. Members of Parliament are beginning to wonder if this is happening elsewhere as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. My backbenchers are again being lost in the shuffle and I propose to defend their rights this afternoon.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL PARKS

ELK ISLAND—ANIMAL STARVATION—INVESTIGATION OF WILDLIFE SERVICE AND PARKS ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development if he has had an opportunity to review the situation at Elk Island Park which resulted in mass suffering and starvation of elk and other wildlife and the subsequent mercy killing operation? Can the minister indicate whether a full investigation will be launched into the functions and responsibilities of the Canadian Wildlife Service and the parks administration with particular reference to this incident?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, my Parliamentary Secretary answered a similar question on the day the House adjourned some time ago and there is nothing that I could add to the comments he made on that occasion.

[English]

Mr. Mazankowski: In view of the fact that an elk feeding program was not instituted as suggested by the minister in answer to a question I posed to him and which is recorded on page 3865 of *Hansard*, can the minister indicate whether this development reflects a change in policy or is it a failure in the administration of existing policy?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the National Parks Branch or the Canadian Wildlife Service cannot possibly foresee all the weather changes liable to occur during the winter season. That was an unusual situation in that area and I am sure that the National Parks Branch and Canadian Wildlife Service employees will record this experience and know how to face any similar conditions in the future.