

*Oral Questions*

rather than being terminated, was appointed to another position? Anyone here certainly knows that no one is appointed, as a promotion, to the Anti-dumping Tribunal from another position.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, from the point of view of those who want to seize on anything to imagine some evil hiding in the recesses of government, and of those who believe in the diabolical theory of politics, any timing is wrong.

Mr. Bertrand had been in his job for some seven years. It is a very trying job. A couple of years ago he underwent a very serious operation, and there was the question of his taking on a less heavy load at that point. It was agreed that because there were several very important investigations under way, notably the one on newspapers, the other one on the oil industry—

**Mr. Stevens:** What about the uranium cartel?

**Mr. Trudeau:** —and the uranium inquiry, he would stay on until these tasks were terminated. They are now terminated; a new phase is beginning.

● (1440)

The man has been there for seven years, and it is a very difficult position. He has indeed been given a promotion, one that he chose among others offered to him, and he has gone from an SX3 position to a DM1. Naturally nobody will believe this if they want to invent stories, Madam Speaker, and that is why I say to hon. members opposite, if you do not want to take our word for it, or the word of his friends, why not ask him yourself?

## QUERY RESPECTING POSSIBLE POLICY DISAGREEMENT

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, since this involves a quasi-judicial position that Mr. Bertrand occupied and is a matter in which the House is unusually interested, I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us whether there was a significant policy disagreement between the minister and Mr. Bertrand prior to his change of position.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, I fail to understand the preface to the question. Mr. Bertrand is now going to a semi judicial post in which he will have much higher authority than previously where he was—

**An hon. Member:** Oh, get off it.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Well, I see some guys having bellyaches over there, Madam Speaker. I cannot deal with this kind of—

**An hon. Member:** Honourable guys.

**Mr. Trudeau:** The hon. member from the New Democratic Party who used some very excessive words yesterday—I wish he would catch up on himself and try and be a little more

rational when he debates this kind of question. I repeat: you can ask Mr. Bertrand the question yourself.

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, the House of Commons is the place in which members of Parliament put questions to the government about matters of government policy and conduct. I put to the Prime Minister a simple question which he did not answer as to whether or not there had been a policy difference of significance between the minister and Mr. Bertrand prior to Mr. Bertrand's change of position, and I would like an answer to that.

I would also like the Prime Minister to indicate to the House that in situations of this kind where there is a change surrounded by controversy in the position of someone carrying out a quasi-judicial function—

**An hon. Member:** It is not quasi-judicial.

**Mr. Clark:** —whether he would institute a practice whereby the minister who occasions that kind of change, in this case the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, would make a full statement to the House of Commons outlining all of the details in the case, or would be prepared to go before a constituted committee of this House to answer detailed questions from interested members about all of the circumstances leading to a change in the activities of a senior public official carrying out a highly delicate and important quasi-judicial function?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says that the House of Commons is the place where members put questions to the government. We believe that, and we have been answering questions for the past several days. What we cannot answer are malicious and inventive rumours that we have been hearing from the opposite side for the last few days. They either take our word for it or they ask the man himself, and I suggest the latter.

**An hon. Member:** What is malicious about that question?

**Mr. Trudeau:** As to the question of setting up some kind of inquiry every time the government—

**An hon. Member:** What is the policy difference?

**Mr. Trudeau:** On the question about policy differences, Madam Speaker, I can say that I know of none, and I hear the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs say that he knows of none either. Therefore this is another invention of the opposition.

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