

Oral Questions

If so, will he admit that the government's intention to bring in legislation which will permit the legal opening of mail is totally without foundation?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party suggests that I made a categorical assertion. I did not. I indicated that I had been briefed on the testimony, that my briefing indicated quite clearly that the witness did not say that the mail opening was irrelevant and unimportant and that it did not lead to the apprehension of the terrorists. That is what I have been told by those who have analysed the briefing. They went on to say that the media reports are completely contrary to that.

Mr. Speaker, I stand on that: I stand on the information I have received. All I ask the opposition to do is to have the decency and the honesty to read the testimony themselves before they make this categorical assertion.

Mr. Broadbent: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I say seriously, but with respect, that just as the Prime Minister is briefed by officials he assumes to be reliable, so are we on this side of the House. We both have some things to confirm before tomorrow.

Referring back to the question of ministerial responsibility that we were discussing earlier today, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether, when he does the checking, he will do it with specific reference to the statement of the former solicitor general as reported at the bottom of page 884 of *Hansard*, where he said:

As a result of this interception they were able to identify someone who was a member of the Japanese Red Army. He was arrested at the border—

That is a categorical link between the interception and the arrest. If, when the Prime Minister checks the record, he finds out there is a clear contradiction between what the RCMP officer said and this kind of assertion, will he find out whether the minister deliberately misinformed him—in which case, would he tell the House—or will he ascertain if it was an official within the minister's department who misinformed the minister? If so, will he ensure that disciplinary action is taken with regard to that official?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have already informed the House of that in answer to the question from the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham. I said quite clearly in the House that I had received this information from the commissioner. The hon. member for Argenteuil-Deux Montagnes, the former solicitor general, presumably received it from the commissioner, too. It was stated to me by the commissioner in my office.

I think this whole series of questions, Mr. Speaker, proves the wisdom of the Solicitor General when he said we should not engage in a running commentary on the testimony before the royal commission. If the opposition is right in its interpretation of the testimony, and we will see after we read it—

An hon. Member: You will resign.

Mr. Trudeau: —who are we supposed to discipline: the commissioner, or the witness? Obviously, if they are right

[Mr. Broadbent.]

there is a contradiction between the two. Who are we to discipline? I ask the opposition to give me the answer to that question, Mr. Speaker. Or should we wait for the royal commission of inquiry?

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

INQUIRY WHY OUTAOUAIS NOT DECLARED DESIGNATED AREA

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. Answering a question put by the hon. member for Témiscamingue on December 14 last, the minister said that he was considering the possibility of declaring the Outaouais region in Quebec a designated area. The conditions having grown worse since then, could the minister tell us what criteria the Outaouais region does not meet to qualify as a designated area?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, when the question was put, I said that we had received representations and that meetings had been held to discuss the economic conditions in the Outaouais region. I then indicated that negotiations were under way with the Quebec government and that I hoped some decisions would be taken for the benefit of the area. Since then, as the hon. member knows, we have concluded an agreement with Quebec dealing with industrial infrastructures and within the next few months the Outaouais area may benefit from some assistance which could perhaps to some extent contribute to give it an economic impetus. As for designating the area, such request was also made to us. I have also received representations from colleagues on this side of the House. That is something I am not prepared to grant at the moment.

Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve): I would like to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Would the minister tell the House whether or not eastern Ontario municipalities and the National Capital Commission have made pressures within his department so the Outaouais region does not obtain this designation?

Mr. Lessard: No, Mr. Speaker, I did not receive such representations.

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[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

MCDONALD INQUIRY—INTENTION OF SOLICITOR GENERAL TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON EVIDENCE ADDUCED

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Solicitor General because of the ambiguity today and the fuzziness of his argument