

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me point out to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons that one of his own members made this serious allegation.

Considering the allegations that democratic organizations were infiltrated by CSIS, that the conversations of members of the Quebec government were monitored by the CSE and a bomb was placed aboard an Air India plane by a CSIS agent, will the government agree to set up a real public inquiry on the actions of federal secret agents?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, responses about the CSE would have to come from the Minister of National Defence.

With regard to the matter reported in the press as being the subject matter of a book, which I have not seen yet, I have just read about it in the press, I understand the matter of Ryszard Paskowski was thoroughly examined by the Security Intelligence Review Committee. In its annual report for 1987-88 it stated: "CSIS dealt properly with Ryszard Paskowski". I think that speaks for itself.

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ETHICS

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and has to do with the role of the ethics counsellor in the now infamous Minister of Canadian Heritage affair.

We have it on good authority, namely from the counsellor himself, that he first found out about the letter on Wednesday, October 26 and that his source was the press and not the Prime Minister's office. He was not asked by the Prime Minister's office to do anything. He was not asked to prepare a report on the letter and he has not done so.

My question is simple: Why did the Prime Minister take the trouble to appoint an ethics counsellor and obligate the taxpayers to pay for the cost of that position if he does not consult with him on an issue this critical when he had over a month to do so?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister more than adequately answered that question when the same question was posed yesterday and last week.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): I suppose, Mr. Speaker, we will ask the same question again until we get an answer that is correct for the Canadian people.

• (1445)

The ethics counsellor has confirmed that it was only on Friday last, October 28, that he was given a document which outlines the rules for ministerial conduct and that he was asked to bring it up to date vis-à-vis dealings with quasi-judicial bodies. The Prime Minister stated yesterday that his recommendations were to be discussed by cabinet.

Would it not enhance public confidence if the guidelines for ministers would be made public, be presented, debated and possibly amended in this House and approved by a free vote of members of Parliament on behalf of all Canadians?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the process that the Prime Minister promised earlier this week.

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[Translation]

ELECTRONIC HIGHWAY

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Speaking yesterday at the convention of the *Association des câblodistributeurs du Québec*, the heritage minister stated that only the Canadian government should control the electronic highway, in order to be able to set national objectives and promote the Canadian cultural identity. He categorically refused to acknowledge the role or responsibility of the provinces in this matter.

How can the heritage minister exclude Quebec and all the other provinces from the electronic highway project and consider them, along with cable operators and municipal governments, as mere lobbies?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, had our colleague taken the time to read the speech I made yesterday, he would know that what he has just said is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am just quoting today's newspaper.

Must we infer from the scornful attitude of the minister that not only does he deny in fact Quebec's distinct character, but that he also rejects off-handedly all our historic claims in matters of culture and communication?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see how my words are distorted. In fact, I have been very open to any contribution the industry and any stakeholder in Quebec can make to the development of the electronic highway.