

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

INVESTIGATION OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION—ACTIVITIES OF OFFICIALS—PRIME MINISTER'S KNOWLEDGE

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. It concerns the daily revelations of the investigations by the Prime Minister's Office into the personal affairs of the Leader of the Opposition as a private individual, the latest being into his private home. I have been associated with the offices of two Conservative Prime Ministers and neither of these gentlemen would have engaged, or ever did engage in such disgraceful tactics—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald:—and neither would the Prime Minister's predecessors, the late Right Hon. Mr. St. Laurent, and the late Right Hon. Mr. Pearson.

My questions to the Acting Prime Minister are: did the Prime Minister know that his principal secretary and others associated with his office were engaged in this kind of nefarious practice, and did the Prime Minister condone those activities?

An Hon. Member: Here he is now.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I was about to say that the Prime Minister was on his way, but he is already here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I think that under the circumstances I should repeat the question.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister having arrived, I will repeat my question. It concerns the daily revelations of the investigation by the Prime Minister's Office into the personal affairs of the Leader of the Opposition as a private citizen, the latest concerning his private home. As I said, I have been associated with the offices of two Conservative Prime Ministers and neither of those gentlemen ever did or ever would have indulged in such disgraceful tactics, and neither would the Prime Minister's predecessors, the late Right Hon. Mr. St. Laurent and the late Right Hon. Mr. Pearson.

An Hon. Member: That bears repeating.

Miss MacDonald: Did the Prime Minister know that his principal secretary and people associated with his Office were engaged in these nefarious practices, and did he condone that operation?

● (1420)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if there had been investigation into personal and private affairs, I think the Hon. Member would be justified in describ-

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ing them as nefarious practices. I know of no such nefarious practices. I know of no investigation into private affairs. I have begun to read the public record in the last hour, and I have seen the exchange which took place yesterday in the House, and have read some of the clippings. It seems to me it has been established quite clearly by the Deputy Prime Minister that there has been no investigation into private affairs. There has been the use of a clipping service. There has been access made to public records. Everything that has been done has been made public.

I understand that my personal secretary has offered access to the media, which have spent quite a bit of time looking at all of our clipping services and other files. There is nothing personal in them. It is all matters culled from newspapers on the public record.

The Hon. Member suggests there were no such practices in the times of previous Prime Ministers. I understand that there is such a practice occurring in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, that he has a couple of boxes on myself that he will not show to the press. Perhaps the hon. lady should dissociate herself from her present Leader since he is so far below the standards established by the other gentlemen that she mentions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER SEEK OFFICIALS' RESIGNATIONS

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell the Prime Minister that I have files on the Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Miss MacDonald: What the Prime Minister fails to realize is that every time an office of a Cabinet Minister sends out any kind of press release, it goes into a file in the Member's office. What he does not seem to understand is that there is a distinction between the Prime Minister of Canada using the power of the state to search a title of a private individual and that which is put into the files of any Member of Parliament in this House. That is the distinction. The problem is that the Prime Minister and his colleagues have been wallowing around in the sewers for so long that they no longer know the difference between right and wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Since his return, has the Prime Minister questioned the people on his staff about this betrayal of trust in the highest office of the land, and has he asked for their resignations? If not, will he do so immediately?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!