

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: I do not doubt that I am going to hear more about this at three o'clock. But may I remind the Hon. Member for Churchill and others that the purpose of questions is to ask questions that are about matters that are under ministerial responsibility and accountability, not, on either side, in answers or questions, to cast aspersions.

POWERS OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): The Prime Minister knows that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence has enormous powers. In light of his previous lack of judgment, how can any Canadian trust him now?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the scurrilous aspects of that question except to say that the people of Canada, when they needed Erik Nielsen in peace and in war, found a man of courage and honour.

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INCOME TAX ACT

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS—AGE PROVISION

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister has received many representations from senior citizens about how they convert their Registered Retirement Savings Plans after the age of 71. Some of them are concerned about the very restricted manner in which the present law requires that to be done. I was wondering if the Minister could advise this House whether he could make some changes in the Income Tax Act that would help seniors handle their money on retirement, perhaps in the Budget?

● (1450)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am very well aware of the interest the Hon. Member has taken in this issue. It is an issue that has been of some interest to me as well. I have read a number of letters regarding the debate that has been going on in some of the financial papers. I believe it is possible to go some way toward meeting the requirements of the senior citizens who express this point of view and it is something at which we are looking very closely. I am not now in a position to make a statement but I hope to be able to deal with this matter in due course.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

EAVESDROPPING ON CAUCUS MEETINGS

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister would be good enough to tell us when he learned of this practice of eavesdropping on the Liberal caucus, and perhaps the NDP caucus, and second,

whether he has verified that the practice has been discontinued and that the Government is no longer eavesdropping on either Parties—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The first two parts of the question are in order but the third part is not.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the first I heard of any kind of allegation in this regard was in 1976 when I read the book.

INTERCEPTION OF CONVERSATIONS—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware that it is an offence contrary to the Criminal Code of Canada to intercept conversations? In view of the fact that that activity is criminal, is the Prime Minister prepared to instruct the RCMP to investigate the conduct of the Deputy Prime Minister to determine whether or not there was a breach of the Criminal Code of Canada?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Justice and Solicitor General let me just say that it is highly improper for the Hon. Member to make any kind of suggestion without stepping outside the House and laying a specific charge. Perhaps while he is in the process of considering this matter, he might ask his colleagues in the Liberal Party where they were when Marc Lalonde was putting out an all-points bulletin within the Department of Finance to read the present Prime Minister's mail. Where was he when the Liberal party was abusing its power in office?

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[Translation]

AIR SAFETY

DEREGULATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil-Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

I had the pleasure of going to Washington, as part of an interparliamentary exchange, to examine the impact of air transport deregulation with the U.S. parties concerned. They were unanimous in saying that it had been a very positive experience, except where safety was concerned.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Could the Minister inform the House whether safety will be a special concern when this sector is deregulated in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the document entitled *Freedom to Move* clearly points out that safety is the number one priority of the Transport Department. Second, the paper proposes that in the process of regulatory reform the Government will not permit