

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister really think it is appropriate for himself, other members of the Cabinet, or any Member of Parliament, to endorse speculative projects which may involve risks, not for themselves but for other Canadians, particularly in this instance pensioners who could be persuaded because of such endorsement to use their pension funds for investment?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is not only unfair but extremely inaccurate for my hon. friend to refer to a proforma letter which I wrote as a fulsome endorsement of the project. There was absolutely nothing in the letter which was a recommendation of the project, least of all a fulsome endorsement of the project. There was an approach made to me, in my capacity as Member of Parliament for Manicouagan, by the Mayor of Seven Islands, which is backed up with a letter from—

[*Translation*]

—Bernard Landry, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations of the Government of Quebec.

[*English*]

There was no fulsome endorsement of it by me whatsoever. There is nothing in the letter which could be construed as an invitation to investors to get involved. Clearly, as a Member of Parliament—

[*Translation*]

I realize the Liberals think it is funny that a Member from Quebec should actually try to bring jobs to Quebecers. I know you think that is funny, and the people of Quebec are watching the Quebec Liberals laugh, but we are going to keep on trying, and that has been a project—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for York South-Weston (Mr. Nunziata).

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[*English*]

THE ADMINISTRATION

STATEMENTS MADE BY SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister and it concerns his Solicitor General and the contempt which he has shown toward the Human Rights Commission and anyone's sense of fair play and justice.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nunziata: How much more incompetence do Canadians have to take from the Solicitor General? The Solicitor General has a fundamentally perverse misunderstanding of his role as a Solicitor General. He has brought the administration of justice into disrepute and he has challenged the very integrity of the Human Rights Commission.

Is the Prime Minister prepared today to dissociate himself and his Government, completely and unequivocally, from the statements which were made by his Solicitor General in this

particular case? Will the Prime Minister extend his apology, and the apology of his Government, to the Human Rights Commission for the conduct of his Solicitor General?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Normally, Mr. Speaker, I would not think that would be deserving of a lengthy reply, except were it not for the fact of the well-known solicitude which the hon. gentleman has for other people's reputations.

I responded yesterday in regard to what I thought was a very thoughtful question which was put by the House Leader for the NDP. I gave a response that I believe was appropriate, which dealt not only with the Minister but with all Members of the House. I have nothing further to add, except that the Hon. Member should perhaps think a little before he speaks in regard to damage being done to other people's reputations, inasmuch as he is the principal sinner in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear hear!

CONDUCT OF SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, Canadians quite justifiably are having some difficulty understanding why the former Minister of National Defence resigned when he simply attended a strip bar in West Germany, and why the Solicitor General is clinging to power when his conduct is so inappropriate. Will the Prime Minister explain why he advised the former Minister of National Defence to resign, and why he has not discussed resignation with the Solicitor General? Can he explain to Canadians why the double standard? Would he not agree that the Solicitor General's conduct to date is far worse than the conduct of the former Minister of National Defence?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The Leader isn't applauding.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, the Leader of the Opposition is not applauding, because he is an honourable man and would not applaud that kind of intervention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: He is just as ashamed of it as the rest of the Members of the House of Commons.

The former Minister of National Defence, in a difficult moment, acted with great honour, as did the Solicitor General, who has given the House an appropriate and thoughtful response.