

veil of secrecy, and turn on the lights in the corridors of power?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the understandable wishes of my right hon. friend, I could not issue a fiat to the Deputy Prime Minister privately because, as he knows, it would be leaked to the papers immediately. It is the garrulous dimension of his personality that I find most attractive.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: I am delighted that my right hon. friend referred to my Kingston speech, because I thought it was one of my better speeches.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: The thoughts raised in that speech were indeed serious. They speak to some of the most important concerns that we all have. Even though I suppose I am somewhat like the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and do not always agree with what is written in the papers, there can be no doubt of the right of the press to know, and that the press constitutes an indispensable cornerstone of our parliamentary democracy. We want to enhance that.

● (1420)

[Translation]

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of great concern to us. Not just the press but especially the Canadian people have a right to know this Government's response and reaction.

May I perhaps ask a final question, futile though it may be?

What is the Prime Minister trying to hide?

[English]

What is the Prime Minister trying to hide?

[Translation]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Nothing.

[English]

Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT DIRECTIVE ISSUED TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICIALS BE RESCINDED

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, since the Right Hon. Prime Minister seems to be feeling very mellow this afternoon in the House, could he perhaps do something positive today and order his Secretary of State for External Affairs who has put a humiliating gag on his department's officials, to remove this gag immediately, until such

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time as new guidelines have been set by the new Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps I should comment on this guideline in the near future. I can inform the Hon. Member that I expect to be able to do so at the next press conference I intend to call this Friday at the latest. The Hon. Member has raised an important question which deserves a complete answer, and I expect to be able to give him all the details very shortly.

[English]

THE PRESS GALLERY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I would like to have an assurance from the Prime Minister concerning this gag order which is making officials in External Affairs a joke around the world today. The impression has been created that they cannot talk to anyone, even over cocktails.

Does the Right Hon. Prime Minister subscribe to the view of his Secretary of State for External Affairs that anyone who criticizes the Government, reporters such as Geoff Simpson, Doug Fisher, and others, are members of the establishment? I hope he will say to Doug Fisher: "Doug, baby, you have come a long way from Thunder Bay to be part of the establishment today".

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot see why anyone would want to criticize this Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: With reference to the names raised, and indeed to all members of the Press Gallery, I view with respect their necessary, indeed indispensable, occupation of legitimate criticism of the Government and the Opposition—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: No; the Opposition do that themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney:—and I commend them. This Government will conduct itself in such a manner as to facilitate and not inhibit their work in any way.

Mr. Chrétien: Lift the gag.

JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CABINET DOCUMENTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I suspect the Liberals are putting gag orders on one another.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!