

regard to Red Army terrorist activity there is no question whatsoever about the interpretation.

An hon. Member: You are told. Have you read it?

Mr. Lawrence: The Prime Minister was obviously wrong in what he said at his press conference on November 18. Who misinformed the Prime Minister? Was the former solicitor general involved in briefing the Prime Minister on this matter?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I presume the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham is admitting that he has not read the 30 pages of testimony. I suggest he do so; then he can make a judgment as to whether that testimony corresponds with, or denies, what I said at a press conference in the month of November. If he still believes what he has said today, I would like him to make that quite clear tomorrow by using quotations from the witness, and not from the press.

Mr. Lawrence: Was the former solicitor general involved in briefing the Prime Minister on this matter, or not? "Yes" or "No"?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the former solicitor general and, indeed, the commissioner of the RCMP, gave me this as an example of the usefulness of mail opening.

ACTION TAKEN RESULTING IN ARREST OF RED ARMY
TERRORIST—STATEMENT OF FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL—
MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, in this House, on November 15, the former solicitor general, when citing illegal acts, made reference to the opening of mail but he did not say it was related to the apprehension of this particular terrorist. He was very categorical and I would like to quote what he said:

Through the mail opening devices which have been described in parliament, the RCMP obtained access to it. As a result of this interception they were able to identify someone who was a member of the Japanese Red Army. He was arrested at the border and deported to Japan.

In a direct voice clip on radio, I heard the constable in question making it clear that the letter opening had absolutely nothing to do in a direct way with the apprehension of this Japanese Red Army member. I would like the Prime Minister to assure the House that he will check with the present Solicitor General as to the basis for this categorical assertion made by the minister's predecessor.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I noted the words of the leader of the New Democratic Party to the effect that the witness said that the letter opening had absolutely nothing to do with the apprehension of the terrorist.

Mr. Broadbent: In a direct way.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. gentleman now says, "In a direct way". I am not sure: if it had absolutely nothing to do with the apprehension of the terrorist, obviously I was misled by the commissioner who reported on this.

Oral Questions

Mr. Clark: Or the former solicitor general.

Mr. Trudeau: Or the former solicitor general who got the information from the commissioner.

Mr. Clark: Blame the commissioner.

Mr. Trudeau: I am not blaming anyone. I was asked by a member of the Leader of the Opposition's own party who had given me this information, and I told him it was the commissioner. I submit today that the commissioner took that position, and I repeat: my information is that it was confirmed by the testimony of the witness, and not inferred, that the interception of the letter was the first clear link established between the terrorist and the Toronto resident.

• (1632)

I submit that the Leader of the New Democratic Party had better not only hear an excerpt of the testimony, but I enjoin him to read the 30 pages and see if he can stand on his feet tomorrow and reassert his accusation, which I submit is false, to the effect that the letter opening had absolutely nothing to do with the apprehension. If he can make that statement tomorrow, then indeed we will have the question of a witness contradicting what the commissioner has said, and probably will say if he is brought before the royal commission of inquiry. Then what will the House do, Mr. Speaker? Will it ask the government to try and arbitrate between the testimony of the commissioner and that of the witness? Obviously, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Trudeau: Obviously, Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Your light is off.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Considering that the Prime Minister has admitted in the House that he has not read the 30 pages—

Mr. Trudeau: Nor have you.

Mr. Broadbent: Considering that he has admitted that he has not read them, I find it a little surprising that he makes the categorical assertion that what he says now is the case. Considering that, at least, the excerpt I heard from the man giving the testimony clearly indicated that the apprehension of the terrorist was obtained by a legal wiretap—the obtaining of necessary information—and that the letter opening was not connected with it, I should like to ask the Prime Minister, and we can both read the testimony in the interim, if he will check, before the House sits tomorrow, to find out if there was a direct connection between the letter opening and the apprehension. Or was it merely a legal wiretap, within the framework of the law, that led to this apprehension?