

Oral Questions

research with it, he is entitled to do so. He has a research operation which is publicly funded. So let us not talk about public funds, because they are available to him to conduct research as he wishes and at his own discretion.

The Hon. Member has asked about what is in the file. Well, the file is in the Prime Minister's Office, the press are invited to go and look at it and see what is there. If the Leader of the NDP wants to go, he will find a chronology of events and a lot of press clippings, and I think it will be a very boring afternoon for him.

TAX FILES AND PRIVATE LIVES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, it is one thing for a political Party, whether on that side or on this side of the House, to conduct a public inquiry into the public activities of any political opponent. It is quite another to conduct an investigation into the private lives and matters that ought to remain private, of political opponents. There is a crucial distinction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: We already have on record the abuse of that principle by the Minister of Finance just a few weeks ago. The Government and the whole country know about that, hence my question about what is in the dossier.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House unequivocally that no official in the PMO has authorized an investigation into the tax files of Members of Parliament, for example, or has in any way been responsible for conducting an investigation into the private lives of Members of Parliament? Surely this is an important and basic democratic question, and if the Government was at all sensitive to propriety, it would be able to give us a categorical no to those questions.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on the first point I want to assure the Leader of the NDP that this particular research exercise had nothing to do with the private life of the Leader of the Opposition. If he will recall, when the Leader of the Opposition became a candidate for the Conservative leadership he issued a very large glossy promotion in which was included, as part of his claim to the leadership, how he handled the Schefferville case. In fact he included with his announcement a very large series of comments on Schefferville.

Mr. Broadbent: I did not ask about that.

Mr. Axworthy: That is the issue.

Mr. MacEachen: In his book *Where I Stand*, in case the Leader of the NDP—

Mr. Broadbent: Answer the question!

Mr. MacEachen: —has not read it, he will find a very important segment dedicated to Schefferville and how the

Leader of the Opposition operated there. We were interested in following up this issue which he brought into the public domain. That is all; nothing to do with his private life. In answer to the Hon. Member's other questions, I give a categorical no.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Deputy Prime Minister, who said he has not discussed the matter with the Prime Minister, is in a position to give such a categorical no. I hope what he says is the case and that the Prime Minister, when he returns, will confirm it.

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF NON INVESTIGATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, to be perfectly clear, is the Deputy Prime Minister assuring the House that none of the political offices of the Government with access to funds which can be used for public inquiry into publicly available information, no question about that, whether it is Schefferville or any other publicly available item—but is he telling us for sure that tax matters or the private lives of Members of Parliament, or of candidates for the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, indeed the Liberal Party, under no circumstances are being investigated by this Government?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the NDP asked me whether the Prime Minister's Office was investigating the private lives of Members of the Opposition, including tax files. I think in a sense the question is very offensive.

Mr. Broadbent: That is what the Minister of Finance did.

Mr. MacEachen: I deny any allegation that arises from it. I said no to his question, and I say no to his second question which he has now applied to the whole Government. Are we investigating the personal lives or personal tax files of Members of Parliament? That is also an insulting question, and the answer is no.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INVOLVEMENT OF OFFICIALS AND MINISTERS

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Acting Prime Minister. What was alleged in *The Globe and Mail* this morning is a very, very grave matter. It is alleged there has been abuse of public office in the Prime Minister's Office. So far the Acting Prime Minister has indicated there are two people, to his knowledge, involved in that matter, Mr. Crenna and Mr. Cadieux. It has also been alleged that Mr. Gillan and Mr. Tom Axworthy, the Prime Minister's principal secretary, have been involved. My question to the Acting Prime Minister is: how wide does that go? It is clear from his remarks that he does not know, and he does not know whether the Prime Minister knows.