

Oral Questions

Canadians know today what is the total amount of the borrowing abroad which the minister announced the other night?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer this question, as negotiations have not started yet.

[English]

Mr. Lawrence: I am not talking about the negotiations; I am asking about the total amount, about which certainly there should be no secrecy. I cannot understand confidentiality on that particular matter. Would the minister care to indicate to the House whether the government of Canada, or the Bank of Canada, has any stand-by credit, or at least an understanding on funds with the Bank of England and, if so, to what extent may we look to that bank for assistance? If he will attempt to rely on some secrecy, let me tell him that certain aspects of this matter have already been publicly reported in Europe by the Reuters news agency.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, a special line of credit with the Bank of England is out of the question. Yesterday I clearly stated the government's position. As for the figures, I will not give them away at this time, and I think hon. members should recognize it is very difficult to speculate on the level of the Canadian dollar. Besides,—

[English]

—yesterday, when I made my statement in the House, the Leader of the Opposition, in his speech in response, referred to the fact that I referred to rumours that were circulated about the so called big scandals. If he has read this morning's *Gazette*, he would know that in London yesterday, because of the false rumour being spread by the opposition, the dollar went down. This happened as a result of something unconnected with the level of the Canadian dollar. I can appreciate the fact that the Leader of the Opposition does not yet realize that he is Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1422)

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Finance has considered that perhaps one of the reasons we are experiencing the financial bleeding we are experiencing is the loss of credibility and confidence in the Minister of Finance in the international market. When matters are publicized abroad about figures and stand-by credits, the minister will not even let the people of Canada know these figures.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lawrence: Could the minister at least confirm the news that is presently found in many financial journals in the western world and in North America about the size of the loan he is attempting to get right now? Could he confirm that figure?

[Mr. Lawrence.]

Mr. Chrétien: No, Mr. Speaker, I will not, because that would be improper at this moment. I am doing this very delicate business in consultation with the governor of the Bank of Canada, and I will discharge my responsibility as I think best. I would like to point out to the hon. member that I hope he was sober last night when he made his foolish speech in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Another cheap shot.

Mr. Stevens: You weren't here.

Mr. Chrétien: You should look at the film.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the hon. member at three o'clock on a question of privilege. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

ALLEGED SURVEILLANCE OF MPs BY RCMP

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Following a series of articles culminating on August 12 with an article in the *Globe and Mail* which contained allegations about the RCMP keeping files on members of parliament, as well as allegations about surveillance of members of parliament and others, I wrote the then solicitor general on August 12—

Mr. Trudeau: I can't hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I understand that because of the noise the Prime Minister did not hear my question. I will repeat it. On August 12, I wrote the then solicitor general concerning a series of allegations which were made in articles which had been published during that week in the *Globe and Mail* pertaining to the surveillance of members of parliament and the keeping of files on members of parliament by the RCMP. I did not receive a letter from the then solicitor general for some time. I subsequently wrote to the Prime Minister. I received a letter from the then solicitor general two days later which concluded with the following quotation of the then commissioner of the RCMP pertaining to allegations about surveillance:

I categorically deny that the RCMP has ever used electronic surveillance, including telephone taps or bugging devices in any form, anywhere, at any time against members of parliament, since the conviction of Fred Rose for espionage in 1947.

Following the submission of a petition by the hon. member for Central Nova yesterday which does contain information which, if it turns out to be true, is a serious contradiction of