

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[English]***ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE****EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE McDONALD COMMISSION**

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Prime Minister has to do with the testimony given this morning to the McDonald royal commission by former RCMP Commissioner Higgitt who is reported as having said that he told three previous solicitors general that members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police security service were breaking the law in carrying out their duties.

The Prime Minister will recall that on June 21, 1977, in this House, on a question of privilege, the Minister of Supply and Services said:

Not once, in my 23 months as Solicitor General, did any RCMP official suggest to me that the RCMP engage in illegal activities in the pursuit of its duties.

Clearly, there is an absolute and complete contradiction between the statement made by Mr. Higgitt this morning and the statement made by the present Minister of Supply and Services relative to his responsibilities in the period when he was solicitor general.

In light of that conflict, I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us whether he has consulted the Minister of Supply and Services to determine whether the statement uttered in this House on privilege by that minister now stands. If he has not done that, can the Prime Minister tell us whether it is his intention to put that question to the present Minister of Supply and Services and whether he will give this House of Commons a complete report on the response of the Minister of Supply and Services?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has stated publicly and privately to me that he is not only willing, but anxious to testify before the royal commission. That is also the case with the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. They have said they are willing to testify. I think the least we could do would be to hear what their testimony will put before the commission.

● (1432)

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, it does underline one of the difficulties of the present procedure in the commission whereby one testimony is made, it is picked up by the media, it is picked up by members opposite in the standing orders—as they did today—and based on allegations from one side which may well be dissipated in further examinations or cross-examinations and which certainly may be put in contradiction by further testimonies. I think this shows the wisdom of the government in saying, "Let us wait for the commission to make its report before jumping to conclusions."

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, what we are dealing with here is a direct contradiction of a statement made by a former commissioner of the RCMP before the royal commission. Also, we are dealing with a statement made deliberately, after preparation

*[Mr. Speaker.]*

on a question of privilege by a minister of this government. There is a certain obligation of leadership of the Prime Minister.

My question has to do with whether or not the Prime Minister, in light of his obligation of leadership and in light of the testimony this morning by former Commissioner Higgitt, has done his duty and has spoken with the present Minister of Supply and Services to verify the accuracy or otherwise of the statement given by that minister to this House of Commons.

If the Prime Minister has not exercised his leadership relative to a statement given to this House of Commons, will he do that and report to the House of Commons fully upon the results of that conversation between himself and the minister of his government?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, it does happen to be the fact that not only have I exercised my leadership in this matter, but I have done this many, many months ago in talking to former solicitors general. I think it ill behoves the Leader of the Opposition to talk about leadership when he did not dare talk to the hon. member for Leeds when the RCMP wanted—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Trudeau:** The Leader of the Opposition makes a strong point of the fact that we are dealing with a direct contradiction. Indeed we are, Mr. Speaker, and we will be very anxious to find who in this contradiction is giving the proper interpretation of the facts. It just so happens that my information and my memory is, subject to verification, that former Commissioner Higgitt is in direct contradiction with himself who, if I am informed correctly, said before the Keable commission in Quebec not so many months ago that he had no recollection of having informed the former ministers of any such thing.

I urge the Leader of the Opposition to look up his files and to find out whether the former commissioner has or has not contradicted himself before, suggesting he has been contradicted by the former minister.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, I regret to find that the Prime Minister is behaving as usual.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** Instead of doing his duty, he is attempting to attack me and former Commissioner Higgitt.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** What is clear so far is that the Prime Minister, with the knowledge this morning of this quite remarkable testimony by former Commissioner Higgitt, has not so far, nor has he shown any indication of an intention to do his duty, in regard to verifying the accuracy of the statements made by the