

their budget has to be cut. I personally am deeply concerned about the implications for free press. I wish the minister would rise in his place and completely repudiate that statement by his cabinet colleague and make it very clear that there will be no cuts.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, with regard to budget cuts and so on, when I was President of the Treasury Board I heard many times from members on the opposite side that the first organization we should look at with regard to cuts was the CBC.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chrétien: The Leader of the Opposition is wrong when he says that the Secretary of State indicated there will be some cuts. He said, and I want to confirm it, that at this time every department of the government is being reviewed. CBC is being reviewed. The government must decide with regard to CBC as with every other organization of government how much more money they will have next year. CBC will be subject to the same decision by cabinet as any other department or agency of this administration.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: What we have here is an indication, now confirmed by the Acting Prime Minister, that there may very well be cuts in the budget of the CBC and those cuts are in the context of clear threats by the Solicitor General.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

SUGGESTION CORPORATION SHOULD NOT CONDUCT
INVESTIGATION PARALLEL TO THAT OF McDONALD
COMMISSION

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): My question to the Acting Prime Minister relates to another very clear implication from the statement last night by the Solicitor General. The Solicitor General implied very clearly that because there is a royal commission of inquiry into allegations regarding security services in this country, the free press of the country should stop its own investigation. Is that the policy of the government of Canada?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): On the first part of the question, Mr. Speaker, we never mentioned cuts. I spoke about the increase in the budget of CBC next year over this year, like every other organization. I wish to tell the House that discussions are going on with the CBC and every other organization of government with regard to the budget for next year. This has been undertaken by the President of the Treasury Board and has been going on for many weeks. Since August there have been many meetings between the President of the Treasury Board and all these organizations. Therefore, there is absolutely no relation. If there is any relation, it is in

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the mind of the Leader of the Opposition who is just trying to ride to power on the back of the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

McDONALD COMMISSION—SUGGESTED ADDITION TO TERMS OF
REFERENCE AND INTERIM REPORT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Prime Minister. Serious allegations of criminal wrongdoing have reached almost veritable flood proportions. In the past 48 hours we have had Operation Cathedral, Operation 300, the very unwholesome spectacle of two ministers of the Crown not knowing 24 hours ago what was going on and the other spectacle of coming into the House and one minister having known about it yesterday and the other not. Considering the very serious matters facing the people of Canada which ought to be brought before the House of Commons, will the Acting Prime Minister on behalf of the government commit the government to request that the royal commission which is investigating the RCMP bring in an interim report not later than January 31, 1978? Second, will the terms of reference be expanded to include the question of political accountability specifically?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a positive suggestion by the leader of the New Democratic Party. We will be looking into that. If it is possible, I think it would be desirable to have an interim report as quickly as possible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I notice the Minister of Justice rushing over. I hope this will not be a case of the government changing its policy during this question period. I appreciate the Acting Prime Minister's serious response to the question. However, I want to be sure that the two aspects of the question are clearly understood. Not only will we get an interim report by the end of January next year but, secondly and crucially, if we want to get rid of the day to day concerns that we on this side of the House appropriately have when matters are presented every day in the press, that the issue of political accountability, essentially to the whole structure of parliamentary government, be specifically referred to in the amended terms of reference. I say that in a serious way because the Solicitor General in previous answers indicated he had no objection to that. If there are no objections, I would like the Acting Prime Minister to commit the government to include that as a specific amendment to the terms of reference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, the government feels that the terms of reference of the McDonald Commission are broad enough to cover every aspect of the problem which concerns the House at this time. If the commission wishes to report on the relationship which must exist between the RCMP, its security service and the minister responsible, it is free to do so,