

Oral Questions

concerning the nature of the document in that it is what appears to be a sophisticated hoax.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Leggatt: But, Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual that any member of this House, given the kind of information that has been available to members in so many areas, would come to the conclusion that the document itself was legitimate. As I say, I accept the Solicitor General's explanation of course. I hope he will go further and not only tell the House that the document itself is false but that the information contained therein is false and that no intelligence activity of the nature alleged in the document took place with regard to the individuals named in the document.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Leggatt: I think if he could do that, it would certainly satisfy the House. I do accept his explanation concerning the document, however. I should say also that I am delighted he is following up with an investigation of the document because we are just as interested in getting to the bottom of these things as is the Solicitor General.

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. I want to thank the Solicitor General for his statement. I also want to ask a question for clarification—perhaps he has covered this point but I did not quite catch it—did he indicate that it was the RCMP on the criminal side only from whom he had received this assurance or does this assurance cover all aspects of the RCMP or related agencies?

Mr. Fox: All aspects of the RCMP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps this has contributed to a more reasoned question of privilege on the basis of those matters that have been raised. In any case, the question period would have begun about seven minutes ago and I would therefore propose to continue it until about seven minutes past three.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE MEMBERS NOT UNDER SURVEILLANCE

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it was certainly refreshing and unusual for us to hear from the lips of the Solicitor General the phrase that the truth can only come out through a quick, complete and thorough examination. We certainly believe that and wish that the government would consequently pay more attention to our demands for a special committee inquiry. In the absence of the Prime Minister who should be here in the House of Commons today—

[Mr. Leggatt.]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark:—my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. It relates to a letter to me from the Prime Minister received in my office on October 18 this year. I think it important that I quote it. It says in part:

I can, however, state unequivocally, that as long as I have been Prime Minister of Canada no Member of the Federal Parliament without his consent has ever been the subject of authorized surveillance, including electronic surveillance, carried out by the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

● (1422)

That is the end of the relevant quotation. I would draw to the attention of the House that the Prime Minister explicitly limited that guarantee to the security service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In light of the revelation made yesterday by my colleague from Central Nova, I should like to have from the Acting Prime Minister the categorical statement that he has sought and received from the security service of the RCMP, and from any other security branch of the government of Canada, an assurance that the statement made to me by the Prime Minister is still operative.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Acting Prime Minister): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should like to tell the hon. member that so far as presence in the House of Commons is concerned the Prime Minister has a much better record than he has.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: I had a meeting this morning with the Solicitor General and I have nothing to add to what he had to report to the House of Commons today about the bugging of the office of the hon. member for Central Nova. He asked the RCMP and all branches of the RCMP, as well as any people involved in security, about this and they gave him their word that they were not involved. Because of the importance of this matter, Mr. Speaker, and because it affects all members of parliament, I urge Your Honour to take upon yourself the carrying out of a full inquiry so that we will know exactly who has done this bugging.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the Acting Prime Minister very carefully avoided my question. Can we have a categorical undertaking by the Acting Prime Minister, on behalf of the government, that the assurance given me by the Prime Minister in a letter received in my office on October 18 is still operative and that it applies not simply to the security service but also to every other security agency of the government of Canada? Can we have that assurance?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have no security organization but the RCMP. The Prime Minister wrote this letter and we have no changes to make to it.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, since the Acting Prime Minister, acting in his capacity as Prime Minister for the moment and responsible for all the activities of the government, has now given me a categorical assurance—because that is what I