

Oral Questions

Canada why they took that extraordinary action. It is not a question of the past, it is very much a question of today.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL UNDERTAKING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice give us an undertaking that he will be back in the House within a week to give us a full answer to the question of whether or not he will reveal the information kept secret by John Turner, so that Canadians can judge for themselves whether or not the Government was justified in throwing Canadians into jail without charge in 1970?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has his history a bit askew. First of all, his Party supported the legislation that was passed by the House at that time. Second, those prosecutions which occurred took place in a province and were not under federal authority. Third, I believe that all of this was looked at by the McDonald Commission and has been discussed by the Canadian public. There is nothing at all of the sinister character that my hon. friend would wish to impute to this past history.

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is now getting briefed by the Prime Minister. Perhaps now he has an answer.

● (1500)

We consider it sinister when Canadian citizens may be thrown into jail without charge. We consider it sinister when the House of Commons is promised that it will receive an explanation about why those actions took place, yet never receives that kind of explanation.

What I am asking the Minister of Justice is quite clear. Will he now give us an undertaking to come into the House within a week to tell Parliament whether he is going to honour the undertaking given by Mr. Turner and ignored by Mr. Turner? Will he also tell us whether he is going to reveal to Parliament the reasons the Government introduced the War Measures Act, an Act that was supported in part by this Parliament because the information was not given and because we took it on faith? We have had enough of taking things on faith. Now we want to know the facts. I want to know if the Minister will come into the House within a week and give us those facts.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, essentially all of the facts on which Parliament and the Government acted at that time are in the public domain. They have been much written about and much talked about. The Hon. Member's Party voted for the actions of the federal Parliament at that time. All of the abuses, if any, which took place at that time have been opened to investigation subsequently, either by the courts of appeal or by the McDonald Commission. There is nothing to be added to that file. At some

time in the future it may be that there will be some small fact that is shown by the revelation of documents, but there is no substantial fact of any kind which is not known to the Canadian people and has not been known for many years.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITION

MR. EPP—OPPOSITION TO BILL C-10

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition to the House this afternoon. It is signed by more than 6,000 Canadians from every province and territory. Now that Bill C-10 will be before the House shortly, these Canadians are availing themselves of their opportunity to indicate to the House their strong objection to the provisions of Bill C-10.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga) rises on a point of order.

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POINTS OF ORDER

MR. ELZINGA—LENGTH OF RESPONSES DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a number of Members in the Chamber I wish to share with you a concern and a reservation that we have. I do so with no criticism whatsoever directed at the Chair. As a Member of the House of Commons who wishes to put questions to government Ministers about their accountability, I share with you my deep concern at the time it takes for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and Cabinet Ministers to respond to legitimate questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elzinga: I stand to be corrected, but I believe that during the entire Question Period only 10 questions were put to Cabinet Ministers. We all have equal responsibilities as Members of Parliament from all across the country. I share with you my deep concern and I make a plea and a request to you to examine how long it takes these individuals to answer questions which could be answered in a much shorter time. They could be much more curt in their reply.

I make that plea to you, recognizing the responsibilities that we all have as Members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is happy to respond to the statement of the Hon. Member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga). For some time the Chair has been concerned about the change in Question Period. It is no longer a period of question and