

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, the Acting Prime Minister is now admitting that public funds were used to examine SEC files in Washington with the sole purpose of destroying the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Nonsense.

Mr. McGrath: I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that if hon. gentlemen on the treasury benches were to stand up to the same scrutiny, they would fail.

● (1425)

REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Acting Prime Minister, who stands in this House and puts his credibility on the line by denying there is anything improper about this, if he is prepared to have an independent inquiry into this—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That is how they reacted to the Erwin inquiry.

Mr. McGrath: The people of Canada do not think this is any laughing matter. Is the Acting Prime Minister prepared—since he stretched his credibility here by denying there was anything wrong with this—to authorize an independent investigation into this sleazy, covert operation which had one objective, and that was, by the improper use of public funds, to destroy the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Member for Central Nova?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member really should try to fasten his attention on the facts which I have put before the House. In the case of Mr. Crenna, he sought information which is publicly available, having to do with a corporation which operates, or used to operate, in Canada. That is all he did. There was no investigation into the personal conduct, nor would I condone if it were ever brought to my attention any such investigation into the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: What are you afraid of?

Mr. MacEachen: I wonder why we should have an independent inquiry about dropping into a public office to get public records in Washington. Does the Hon. Member want an inquiry on that?

ROLE OF RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the Acting Prime Minister might want to tell the

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House what the role was of Mr. Pierre Cadieux who, apparently, was operating as "a secret agent" in this covert operation?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: Why was he operating clandestinely if there was nothing to hide, if this was an operation which was legitimate, proper, and above board?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with Mr. Crenna who is accused of being a secret agent. Let us turn to the other person. Who is this secret agent to whom the Hon. Member refers?

Mr. McGrath: I did not call him a secret agent.

Mr. MacEachen: Who is this covert operator as mentioned in *The Globe and Mail*, and what was his scene of operations? Well, the person in question is currently enrolled as a student at the University of Ottawa. He was taking a summer job and doing this research work for a couple of months prior to going to university. So that is the covert agent. What was the scene of his covert operations? The library, Mr. Speaker, at the University of Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: More.

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Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister on the same subject. The Acting Prime Minister has said, and I listened with care to his answers, that what was obtained here was public information which was publicly available. However, I want to say to him that the ordinary citizen of Canada does not work in the Prime Minister's Office, and does not have access to the funds and to the power of the state. That is an important difference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Cadieux said, with reference to the Minister of Finance's complete abuse of privacy recently in terms of revealing correspondence of a then private citizen who happens to be now the Leader of the Opposition, that the use of those letters was "a complete ignorance of the dossier". My question to the Acting Prime Minister is this: if that was a complete ignorance of the dossier, what else, what other material is in the dossier?

● (1430)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member talks about the use of funds. The Prime Minister has an office budget, and so does the Leader of the New Democratic Party. He has \$500,000 in his office budget. Those are public funds to run his office, and if he wants to do