

*Oral Questions*PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF COMMITTEE ON SENATE REFORM
FROM ALBERTA

Mr. Speaker: May I also call to the attention of the House the presence in the Senate Gallery of a Committee on Senate reform from the Province of Alberta.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL REVENUE

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TASK FORCE—
APPEARANCE OF DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Revenue. In response to a question asked this weekend with respect to immunity and with respect to Revenue Canada officials, the Minister is quoted as follows:

—I have no objections that officials meet with them—

—meaning the task force, and to and give them any comments they're asked for as long as those parliamentary rules are accepted

The Minister knows that this is not a parliamentary task force. The Minister knows that there are no parliamentary rules.

I infer from the Minister's answer that there will be no immunity which will be given to Revenue Canada officials who testify and appear before this task force. Will the Minister give an undertaking today that all Revenue Canada officials who wish to testify before this task force will be able to do so without fear of punishment and without fear of retaliation? And exactly what did the Minister mean by saying "parliamentary rules", if they apply?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad the Hon. Member asked this question. I said in my reply that it was necessary to make a distinction between a Parliamentary Committee, which is the Standing Committee of the House, and a Caucus or a Caucus Committee. Now, if I understood correctly, the reference was to a Caucus Committee of Progressive Conservative Members, and I pointed out that there were also specific guidelines for this particular circumstance, namely, a practice Hon. Members are well acquainted with which concerns information given by officials to a Caucus or Caucus Committee, and which applies to all party caucuses. I also pointed out that the guidelines and common practice which apply in the case of caucuses or committees apply in this situation as well.

[*English*]

Mr. Speyer: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister has said in his circuitous way is that anybody from Revenue Canada who appears and testifies before this task force, not a parliamentary task force but a Conservative task force, will have abso-

lutely no immunity from punishment or retaliation. That is what the Minister is saying.

GUIDELINES GOVERNING APPEARANCES BY OFFICIALS

Mr. Chris Speyer (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister please confirm the accuracy of that assertion, that anybody from Revenue Canada who appears before this task force is subjecting himself or herself to retaliation or punishment for giving MPs knowledge of policy that exists within Revenue Canada?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is indulging in sophistry. First of all, he would have to admit that it is a Caucus Committee of Progressive Conservative Members. The Hon. Member said that it was not a Committee of the Progressive Conservative Caucus. If it is a Committee of the Progressive Conservative Caucus, that Committee and that Caucus must agree to follow the guidelines and the rules of the game, which are well established, and parliamentary practice, which is also well established, when officials meet either the Caucus of the New Democratic Party, the Progressive Conservative Party or the Liberal Party. If the Hon. Member refuses to accept these rules and guidelines and this practice, he should come out and say so.

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[*English*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

THE DONALD MARSHALL CASE—COMPENSATION INQUIRY

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister who, I know as a Nova Scotian, will have particular interest in this question. Does the Acting Prime Minister share the shame I feel as a Nova Scotian over the miscarriage of justice in the Donald Marshall case, and the disgrace I feel as a Canadian parliamentarian that this Parliament, through the Minister of Justice, has not taken the lead to redress this travesty of justice in trying to work out some form of compensation for Donald Marshall?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I understand that matter is, in some important aspects, now before the courts in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Miss MacDonald: Shame!

Mr. Kaplan: I am interested in waiting for the result of that process.

Mr. Crosbie: He has been in jail for 11 years. Never mind the courts.