

Oral Questions

fact that the committee hearings were not televised and it is possible for histrionics and deliberate falsehoods to be televised in this House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —that the hon. member and her colleagues are pursuing the course of raising this matter.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister.

As you know, version No. 1, which was a whitewash, blamed Jean Chrétien's nephew for what happened—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I asked the hon. member to not make accusations at this point in the House. If what I asked the hon. member to refrain from doing is repeated in the other official language of our country, it is just as much a matter of concern to the Speaker as it was the first time.

The hon. member can put a question and can perhaps draw whatever conclusions hon. members wish to draw afterwards, but let us put the question first and see then what the answer is.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I believe the former Prime Minister is an honourable man. I know that 12 years ago he tabled in the House a proposal relating to ministerial responsibility. Considering today's events, when we realize that all the other people in his office had the information, is he prepared to accept his responsibility as a minister and resign?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say two things, the first one in English.

[*English*]

I should not have used the phrase "deliberate falsehood". That is inconsistent with the rules of the House and I apologize for that and withdraw that phrase.

[*Translation*]

Second, as far as ministerial responsibility is concerned, the government's position was made clear today before the parliamentary committee. However, for some reason, Liberal and NDP members left the room and did not avail themselves of the opportunity provided under our Standing Orders to ask questions in a committee that had been appointed because the Opposition and the government had sought a way to get at the truth of the matter, the truth, without partisan accusations. That is what we are looking for here.

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• (1450)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, my question affects some 250,000 government employees and their families. My question today is directed to the President of Treasury Board. Would the hon. minister confirm that during some four months of negotiations with the alliance representing 150,000 government employees, the only offer that his negotiators were prepared or willing to discuss was the government's wage offer of 0 per cent increase in the first year, 3 per cent in the second, and 3 per cent in the third year of the contract.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I am in a position to confirm that the guidelines set out in the budget were those on which our negotiator based discussions with the unions.

That being said, we also told them of the fiscal situation which commanded us to take these measures. We are quite prepared to look at other aspects of the collective agreement, which is a very thick document dealing with a lot of other issues, but first we have to make sure that we agree with each other on the particular basis of the 0-3-3.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, would the minister confirm that yesterday he told negotiators for all of the government servants that if they did not agree to this formula, 0-3-3, he would bring in legislation imposing the settlement on all of the