

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: No!

Mr. Speaker:—and keep it within the rules, I will hear him.

Mr. Kaplan: If I can repeat my first question, it was simply to ask the Deputy Prime Minister why the Prime Minister is making adverse statements about the Hon. Member for Rosemont. Exactly what has she said that he objects to?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has raised a lot of allegations. One he noted is that the Hon. Member for Rosemont has evidence of kick-backs. That is totally contrary to the report issued by the RCMP. I find it very strange that a former Solicitor General, who was a spokesman in this House on behalf of the Government for the RCMP, would second guess the RCMP. I find that totally unacceptable.

Mr. Kaplan: They said no such thing, Mr. Speaker. They simply observed they had no information from her to initiate a criminal investigation. There was already one ongoing.

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO MEMBER FOR DUVERNAY

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister about the statement we all heard this morning made by the Hon. Member for Duvernay, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State. He is in the House and perhaps he would like to answer the question because his statement was far from enlightening.

Did anyone on behalf of the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State ask that Hon. Member exactly what he meant when he said "I could put a dozen people in prison"? What does that mean?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the Hon. Member was in the House—

Mr. Kaplan: I was in the House.

Mr. Mazankowski:—when the Hon. Member made his statement, but perhaps I can just refer to it because I think it explains what was said and the unfortunate interpretation placed upon this. Referring to the article in question, he said: "This article presents an unfortunate interpretation of what I wanted to say concerning the necessity of maintaining the highest moral standards in political life. If my thoughts brought about confusion it is because I did not clearly express myself. This was done through a telephone interview, alternately in English and French, with English being my third language".

I think we have all been misquoted and misinterpreted. I think the Hon. Member admits the fact there was a misinterpretation. He has apologized to the House. He rose at the earliest opportunity. In his opening comments he said: "I rise today at the first available opportunity on a question of

privilege to clarify an erroneous perception which may have arisen from the comments of mine reported in *The Ottawa Citizen* on August 19". Just the other day the Hon. Member for York Centre himself was misinterpreted and we gave him an opportunity to make a clarification. What is good for him should be good for Members on this side of the House as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that he did not qualify or clarify the statement he made to the media.

STATEMENT REPORTED IN *LE DEVOIR*—CLEAN-UP OF POLITICAL MORALS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Third, I would like to ask why the Prime Minister is so angry with the Hon. Member for Rosemont, when in his statements as reported in *Le Devoir*, he admitted that even after four years as Prime Minister, it was still necessary to clean up political morality here in Ottawa.

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member wants to blame the Prime Minister. My understanding is that the decision taken was a Quebec caucus decision. There are certain decisions that are taken in the Liberal caucus and in other caucuses. I do not know why the Hon. Member would take offence at that.

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO MEMBER FOR LASALLE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns the Prime Minister's role in protecting ethics in government and his role as administrator of the conflict of interest rules.

Over the weekend another Conservative Member, this time the Hon. Member for LaSalle, said, referring to political contributions to his Party:

"What goes into (the party coffers) is public", he says. "It's what falls off to the side, the crumbs that drop off the table" that bother him.

When did the Prime Minister find out about these new allegations of a diversion of funds and what does he intend to do about it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, here we have another allegation with regard to the—

Mr. Broadbent: Yes, from another one of your Members.

Mr. Mazankowski:—comments that appeared in *The Globe and Mail* today. I am advised by the Solicitor General that the RCMP is today conducting an interview with the Hon. Member. I would hope that for the time being it may rest there until such time as information is provided.