

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to seek his answer in the Report of the Royal Commission on Security published in June 1969, a commission on security chaired by a very able and well-known former civil servant, by a present Justice of the Supreme Court and by a former leader of the New Democratic Party.

An hon. Member: Which you ignored.

Mr. Trudeau: This Royal Commission on Security stated at page 21 of the report:

A security service will inevitably be involved in actions that may contravene the spirit if not the letter of the law and with clandestine and other activities which may sometimes seem to infringe on individuals' rights;

Mr. Speaker, this is from a group of outside experts who realize, apparently more than the opposition of both parties wish to realize, that matters of subversion call for a very, very fine line to be drawn between respect for civil liberties on one side and the protection of the security of the state on the other.

Mr. Gillies: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Surely the right hon. Prime Minister will recognize in this, probably the most important problem to face this country in many, many years—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gillies: —that the responsibility that was being drawn in that report to the Cabinet and Prime Minister of this country was to always be certain that there was a difference between subversion and other activities that might not be agreeable to the government or that the government might agree were not appropriate and it is the responsibility of the government to make sure that this line is never transgressed. Surely, the Prime Minister must know that nothing is so threatening to the survival of democracy and in any situation or any country where democracy has fallen, it has fallen when this line has been transgressed. A government has to be responsible for making sure it is never transgressed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1502)

Mr. Trudeau: I agree completely with the hon. member in the preamble to his question. Not only do I agree with him in theory but I can point out that in fact we made sure that this very fine line between subversion and dissent was not crossed by the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: You did not.

Mr. Trudeau: How did we make sure that this line was not crossed?

An hon. Member: According to Pierre.

[Mr. Gillies.]

Mr. Clark: You authorized the activities which led to the surveillance of the PQ.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, without seeking the floor, is stating something which is absolutely, unequivocally, false, and I wish he would have the courage to stand up and say it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we made sure this fine line was not crossed.

An hon. Member: You did not.

An hon. Member: That is precisely the point—you never have.

An hon. Member: You did not do anything.

An hon. Member: You better see what your Solicitor General said last Friday.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Is this democracy? You don't let a man speak.

Mr. Trudeau: We have a fine example of respect for civil liberties from this howling mob sitting across the aisles.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: They do not have to take my answers as the absolute truth.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: They can stand in their places and challenge them, if they have the courage, but I would suggest that the way to do it is not by hiring private detectives, as that party does, and not by having some phony bugs planted in their office, which is the way they do it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Fraud.

An hon. Member: Prove it.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You blew it this time, baby.

An hon. Member: Why don't you lay a charge?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Stand up and say it.

Mr. McGrath: Stand up and make a charge.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Greenwood.