

*Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

be partisan and collect political and background information on Members of this side when he is Leader of the Opposition, but that that somehow will stop if he ever becomes Prime Minister, then the Hon. Member is dreaming in technicolour.

The Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead, by his own admission in front of the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee, has absolutely confirmed that his practices as Leader of the Opposition were precisely the same as his practice as Prime Minister. The quotes are here in the report of the committee. I have put them on record. The words of the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead speak for themselves.

There is no question of privilege involved here. There was no intimidation involved here. There was a collection of documents from the public record to determine where it was that the Leader of the Opposition stood on issues, just as those kinds of documents and that kind of information is collected by the Opposition on Ministers, and certainly the Prime Minister, as he indicated in Question Period earlier today. It is a specious question of privilege that is being raised here. I agree with my colleague, the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) that this has been done today to waste the time of the House so that we could not get on with other matters such as dealing with budgetary issues.

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to what the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) had to say because there is one area here that neither he nor any other Member on that side of the House has dared to deal with. The question comes up as a result of what has taken place and what has been revealed in the last few days. It is a question that perhaps the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre does not understand. It is a question of morality. That is exactly what is involved here.

I want to say, as a person who worked in the Office of a former Prime Minister, that we knew what the rules and regulations were. We knew what it was that staff were able to do. We knew the code of behaviour and ethics that were expected. That is something which the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), his staff and the people who sit behind him, have lost sight of. That is the difference.

Yesterday there was an interesting response to a question from a member of the press. An official in the Prime Minister's Office, David Crenna, said:

● (1550)

I don't know what you consider legitimate PMO behaviour.

That, Mr. Speaker, is really at the heart of all of this. Those people do not know and do not understand what is legitimate behaviour in the Prime Minister's Office. The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) does not understand what legitimate behaviour is any more; the Prime Minister does not understand that there is such a thing as legitimate behaviour—the things that people can straightforwardly question about and information that can be gathered. But that does not include going into the private personal lives of individuals in this country.

**Mr. Evans:** You have done it to me.

**Miss MacDonald:** As you have done. That is exactly what is at stake here, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair has done very little indeed, with all due respect to the Hon. Member.

**Miss MacDonald:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. When I said "you", I made a mistake. I meant through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Members on the Liberal benches. I do apologize to you, Sir.

I also want to mention that there is a very real difference between the kinds of materials which I as an individual Member of Parliament have in files being sent around by Cabinet Ministers, stacks of material, and the matter we are discussing. I sometimes wish the stacks were a lot less. It is the paper burden, overburden. But it is there in files. People also write to us. You would be surprised how many people write to me about the Prime Minister. What they have to say about him is not very flattering.

**Mr. Fisher:** People write to me about you.

**Miss MacDonald:** Indeed they may. The Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) says they may write about me. I agree. That happens to be what people want to do. I do not argue that. That is a very different thing from having that kind of material in a file and going out and making an underhanded search for material that people in the Prime Minister's Office thought they could find in the files in Washington or files about a house in Montreal so they could discredit the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney). That is exactly what they were doing, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Evans:** Where was the covert action? What is covert about that?

**Miss MacDonald:** The question is, why were they out looking for this information? How much more do they have which is hidden somewhere? Not just about the Leader of the Opposition, but about anybody whom they may happen to think they want to get. That is really what this is all about and what the question of privilege is about. There is not a single Member in the House of Commons who has dared to stand and raise a question about the operations of this Government. There is not a single Member now who is outside the thrust of the kinds of operations we have seen emanating from the Prime Minister's Office in the last number of weeks and months, not one. That is what you have to judge, Sir. How far is this kind of operation allowed to go? How far is the abuse of the Prime Minister's Office allowed to extend?

**Mr. Fisher:** As far as the Library? Tell us about the libraries, Flora.

**Miss MacDonald:** Let me tell you. Why was Mr. Cadieux told by people in the Prime Minister's Office not to go to the Library of Parliament, where he could have found that information? Because they did not want people within this purview