

Inquiries of the Ministry

and told him that in certain interests—you can fill that part in on your side—he was wanted as commissioner?

Hon. Paul Martin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my right hon. friend does not in any way wish to cast a reflection on the royal commissioner.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I said that I was sure the right hon. gentleman, who is a distinguished member of this house, a former prime minister and a lawyer of great experience, would not wish to cast a reflection on the royal commissioner who was appointed by the government of Canada with the approval of this house. He is a member of the Supreme Court of Canada and—

Mr. Diefenbaker: He was not appointed with the approval of this house. This was just a narrow-minded appointment in so far as the terms of reference are concerned.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I must take the view, whatever my right hon. friend may feel to be the provocation, and on that I am not clear, that I cannot sit in my place at this time and listen to the right hon. gentleman express himself in a manner that could be construed as a reflection on the royal commissioner. If that is what my right hon. friend has done, then I must take strong issue with him and suggest that this is not the course that should be followed in this instance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ricard: Answer the question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting for the answer. Did the minister ask the judge to accept this? Did he telephone him and say, "Now, this is something you could do for me"?

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I am not the Minister of Justice; I am not the Prime Minister of Canada. I did not speak to the Minister of Justice. I did not speak to anyone, because it would have been outside my ministerial responsibilities. In any event, if I had, that would not be a matter to which my hon. friend would be entitled to refer in this way, because implied in this suggestion is a reflection on a judge who holds an honourable post—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—in the final court of appeal of this country.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting for the answer. Did the minister ask this judge to act because there were certain interests at stake?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is what I ask.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked a question, the minister has made a reply, and I think the matter should be allowed to stand there.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I know he did.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Solicitor General. Has he personally looked into the question of whether the telephones of members of parliament are being tapped or interfered with by means of electronic listening devices? If so, will he provide a list of the names of members whose telephones are being so tapped or listened to by means of electronic devices?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is not acceptable in the way it was put by the hon. member because he is making an assertion.

Mr. Nielsen: With the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McIlraith: If you have a charge to make, make it.

Mr. Ricard: That is what you said a year ago.

Mr. Nielsen: With the greatest respect to you, sir, I was not making any such allegation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: I was seeking information from the Solicitor General and asking whether he had ascertained if telephones of members of parliament have been subjected to wiretapping or electronic eavesdropping devices.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member that the question is of a general nature. It may be of extreme importance in the minds of hon. members but I do not think the question is so urgent that it should be asked at this very moment. It could very