

Oral Questions

If it is the desire, or if there is some reason why any charge should be made against anybody, whether they are members of the Cabinet or outside the Cabinet, then there is a proper way to lay that charge, and it is not in Question Period by way of a preamble.

The Hon. Member for York Centre is a very experienced parliamentarian who has occupied positions of high importance and trust in the country, and he knows the rules as well as the rest of us do.

I am not stopping him from asking questions about conflict of interest guidelines, or what the Government may or may not have known at the time, but I will not permit Hon. Members to use preambles to make charges against people. If that is what they feel they must do, there is another way to do it.

The Hon. Member will continue his question and keep in mind the Chair's admonishment.

Mr. Kaplan: I will do so, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Prime Minister acknowledge that the guidelines that I referred to, and that he has introduced, were not respected, that the guidelines were not policed at all, and that the Prime Minister had no basis whatsoever for claiming that that Member would be back in Cabinet?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the assurance that I and the Deputy Prime Minister gave to the House was complete and forthcoming, was based on all of the information that we had at that time, and was secured in a proper and appropriate way. That information was shared with the House.

Clearly, when the article first came out, there were meetings between the Deputy Prime Minister and the Assistant Deputy Registrar General, there were meetings between the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister, and there were meetings between myself and the Minister in respect of each and every one of those allegations.

Based on the assurances that we received, the Deputy Prime Minister and I spoke to the House in the manner in which we did. I take back not a word of what I said, because that was based upon information imparted to me and to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Clearly, the Parker Royal Commission, having interrogated and examined this matter very carefully for some 18 months, has adduced new evidence which is before the country. I acknowledge that we accept that version, and will be acting upon it.

ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): The Prime Minister says that he takes nothing back; the Member for York—Peel says that he takes nothing back and did nothing wrong. I began by asking what had been learned from this experience.

I wish to ask the Prime Minister, in light of all that has happened, has he changed? Are the guidelines going to be enforced? For example, in light of everything that has happened has the Prime Minister taken any steps to assure that those guidelines are now being respected by his Ministers?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear, and I know that my hon. friend would want this not to be subject to any misinterpretation.

When I stated that I take nothing back with regard to what I said, that dealt with the information that I supplied to the House pursuant to an examination of the material and discussions and questions submitted to the Minister by me, by the ADRG, by the Deputy Prime Minister, and conveyed to the House that same day. It is in regard to that that I ask my hon. friend to understand my use of the phrase.

In regard to the conflict of interest guidelines and problems, I appointed an impartial Royal Commission, and a Chief Justice of impeccable character to conduct this investigation fully, which he did. As evidence unfolded before the commission, which only came out in the course of using the instruments available to a Royal Commission and not available to an ordinary Member of the House or even to the Prime Minister, in light of this I instructed the Associate Secretary of the Cabinet, Mr. J. L. Manion, to review personally with each Minister his or her situation under the code very carefully, and advise me in regard to that interrogation.

I received the advice from the Associate Secretary of the Cabinet that, in his opinion, all the principles and the procedures were being complied with in all cases of members of the Cabinet. I share that information with my hon. friend.

PRIME MINISTER'S TELEPHONE CALL TO FORMER MINISTER

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): The Prime Minister was reported by the Member for York—Peel yesterday as having made what was characterized as a "call of encouragement". In the light of the revelations today, it is interesting that the Prime Minister had discussions or exchanges with the Hon. Member for York—Peel, and in spite of that he was prepared to give him a call of encouragement.

In light of the press release and statement put out yesterday, what was the tenor of that encouragement? Given that the Member for York—Peel does not accept the judgment, he indicates that he is considering appeal, I want to ask whether the encouragement of the Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: The difficulty here is strictly procedural, and that is whether or not that question pertains to the administration of the Government. I do not want in any way not to give the Hon. Member the appropriate opportunity to ask questions, but I have some considerable doubt as to whether the private conversation between the Prime Minister and the Member of Parliament relates to the administration of the Government.