

Privilege—Miss Bégin

In other words, the minister is accusing the RCMP of potentially bugging ministers of the Crown. She continued:

First thing you know, there's a leak, in newspapers, and then its members of parliament on both sides of the House whose private lives are going to be questioned. That approach I don't think is the job of the RCMP, or of any police. Eh, bon. That's all for the RCMP.

The matter we want to know about, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is a legitimate question for this House of Commons, is whether, when expressing such opinions about the RCMP, saying they can be using gadgets where they want and can be bugging you, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, as a member of the cabinet of the Government of Canada, was expressing the view of the government as to the power of the RCMP and the degree to which the RCMP operates free from control by the Government of Canada. This is a very important matter to the House, particularly in relation to the debate which has been occupying this place for the last several days.

The other matter which is of very real concern to us, and has reference also to the question of the policy of the government and what has lead the government to take positions it has taken, and I would quote again from the minister who says—

An hon. Member: From what are you quoting?

Mr. Clark: I quote again from the transcript of the recording of a speech the minister made to the students at Carleton University.

An hon. Member: That's not true. It is a phony one.

Mr. Clark: As I have said, if the minister believes that these statements do not correctly reflect her words, she has the right to get up—

An hon. Member: She has already done so.

Mr. Clark: She has the right to get up and say it is wrong.

Mr. Ouellet: You should just listen.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, we hear a great deal from the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) who usually communicates by telephone, but who is instead now heckling from across the floor of the House.

Let me just read this portion of what was said by a minister of the Crown for Canada, involving a matter which raises a question regarding the policy of the government, and I put it in context with something said by her on the subject. The minister said:

Of course, as a Quebecer, I must say as a lay person—

She made that distinction. She said:

—I must say as a lay person—I was not a member of the cabinet at that time—that when they did that—these various actions in early 1975—there is no way somebody is going to tell me that as a Quebecer there was a state of national emergency somewhere in Quebec and some threats to God-knows-what. I never perceived anything like that.

[Mr. Clark.]

● (1522)

My colleagues suggest I should carry on. It continues:

If that was the threats, the mentality of the beginning of 1973, what they would have done since the 15th of November last year, they might have bugged the complete province of Quebec. So that's all for the RCMP.

What is important is that we have the words of one minister of the Crown regarding the climate at the time of the illegal acts. We have also the careful, deliberate, prepared statement by the Solicitor General in this House of Commons on the afternoon of October 28, 1977. On that occasion the Solicitor General said that the illegal activities were carried out in the absolute conviction that its sole object was to promote the security of Canada, given the political and social climate prevailing in 1973.

On the one hand we have the Solicitor General saying that the political and social climate prevailing in 1973 was of a nature which would cause illegal acts to be performed. On the other hand, within a matter of two weeks, we have another minister, the Solicitor General's seatmate, saying that as far as she is concerned, as a member of the cabinet and as a member of the House of Commons who presumably knew what her colleague said on behalf of the government when he made his speech on October 28, she disagrees completely with the question as to the climate in Quebec at that time.

This is important because it has to do with the atmosphere within which members of the security service would have interpreted and acted upon directions from the Government of Canada that led to the accomplishment of illegal acts. That is particularly important because one of the matters we want to determine in this House is just what the roles of the ministers were, and the degree of direction which was given by ministers of the Crown that caused members of the security service to commit illegal acts.

Frequently the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has intervened in this matter. We have the Solicitor General and the Prime Minister saying that these illegal acts occurred because there was an unusual climate in Quebec during that period, and we have another minister saying that there was no such unusual climate in Quebec during that period.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), I extend to the House his apologies. He had an engagement outside of the House which made it necessary for him to leave about 2.30 p.m. However, since the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) has based her question of privilege on remarks made yesterday by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, I think I should say at least a few words in reply.

The minister's complaint against the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby yesterday was that his allegations were without any foundation. May I point out that, when my leader raised the matter yesterday, he had before him a copy of an article which appeared in *The Charlatan*, the newspaper of the