

Oral Questions

Mr. Basford: Well, Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the corporation in this specific instance. I presume it would be—

Mr. Hellyer: You are the responsible minister.

Mr. Basford: I presume it related to matters that were related to work long before I was the minister, and that the corporation assumed that action appropriate to the circumstances had been taken at the time the knowledge was made available to CMHC.

STUDENT CO-OPERATIVE PROJECTS—REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPRIETY

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question. In light of the fact that the Acting Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, refused a request for a judicial inquiry, and in light of the fact that there might be some conflict of interest because a man by the name of Wright, in the law firm of Lang, Michener, etc. in Toronto formed all these companies, and of course is closely associated with the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the President of the Privy Council—I believe he is an adviser—would he now, in light of the conflict that there appears to be, and in light of the answer given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and in light of the scandal that seems to be raised day by day without getting at the facts, agree to have a judicial inquiry, subpoenaing witnesses so that this whole thing can be aired?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. member that if he feels a scandal does exist involving this minister he should make his allegations in the proper way before this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, through you I wish to say I never mentioned a scandal involving the minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: What I did suggest was that there is certainly a racketeer tax scandal in this college residence enterprise. I am asking the Prime Minister if he will now agree to have a judicial inquiry, and we will find out where the scandal lies and who is involved in it?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly very grateful to have the admission of the hon. member that there is no scandal involving any member on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

Mr. Woolliams: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar. The hon. member has already asked a number of supplementaries. Perhaps I might be allowed to recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar now.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

Mr. Woolliams: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker; I can see why you take that attitude, Sir, and I say this with the greatest respect to you, but you have listened to the Prime Minister's answers and he has refused to answer the questions I put to him. If he wants to remain silent, then let him keep silent because he is hiding something.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows what the rules are. The hon. member can ask questions, but either a minister or the Prime Minister can refuse to answer, or can give answers with which the hon. member asking questions is not satisfied. As a matter of fact, that happens very often.

Mr. Trudeau: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Is the right hon. Prime Minister rising on the same question of privilege?

Mr. Trudeau: I just want to explain to the House that the hon. member was asking a question in terms that it was put to the Acting Prime Minister on the day I was returning from having seen Her Majesty.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have to proceed with some order in the House. The hon. member for Calgary North asked a number of questions. Then, the Chair recognized the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, after which the hon. member for Calgary North rose on a question of privilege, and I suggest there was no privilege. I am not sure what can be done at this point to pursue this matter. Unless the right hon. Prime Minister has his own question of privilege, I think we should go on to the next question.

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do. It arises from the apparent misunderstanding by the hon. member of what the Acting Prime Minister said in the House last Monday in answer to his question. It was not an answer which had the effect of refusing an inquiry. On the contrary, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, as reported at page 5402 of *Hansard* said:

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the minister himself would continue with these inquiries. If he is satisfied that the matter does not require further investigation I would be happy to accept his advice. On the other hand, if he decides that it is necessary to proceed further I am sure he would if that were in the public interest.

Therefore, there was not a refusal of an inquiry. There is a request of the minister to pursue this matter further.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Again that is debate as to what was said or what was not said. Because of the obvious interest of hon. members, if the hon. member for Calgary North wishes to ask a further supplementary he will be recognized for this purpose in a moment, but again I suggest to hon. members that the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, having been recognized, might be allowed to ask his question. After that I will recognize the hon. member for Richmond. There are some rights in that part of the House also, and then I will return to the hon. member for Calgary North.

Order, please. I apologize for the third or fourth time to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, but the hon.