

Oral Questions

Mr. Clark: We are dealing here with the Solicitor General at least twice removed in this case. Are we to understand we now have from either the Prime Minister or the present Solicitor General an assurance that the correspondence or report referred to did not come to either the present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the present Minister of Supply and Services or the present Solicitor General? Is that the case?

Mr. Trudeau: If the question is related to the break-in of the APLQ, yes, that assurance has been given to me by the previous Solicitor General.

ALLEGED ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES—POSSIBLE LIMITATION ON DISCLOSURE BY MINISTERS TO McDONALD COMMISSION

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question. It relates to the policy of the Government of Canada concerning testimony that the Prime Minister of Canada will be giving when he responds to any subpoena that might come from the McDonald royal commission. I would like to know whether it will be the policy of the government of Canada to have limits upon the full disclosure of the role of the Prime Minister or any minister in any matter before the McDonald inquiry.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, "in the modern world, governments have to authorize and follow some secret activities."

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure from where that quotation came which the Prime Minister so carefully read, but I would like him to stop keeping secrets from the House of Commons on the question of policy of the government. Is it the policy of the government that in any testimony he gives under subpoena to the McDonald royal commission there will be any limits upon the full disclosure of his role or the role of any minister in any matter relating to the terms of reference of the commission of Mr. Justice McDonald?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to know from where I got that quotation. I got it from page 453 of *Hansard*. I was reading the beginning of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, this may appear to the Prime Minister to be good grammar, but I remind him that this is the House of Commons of Canada where he is responsible to parliament on questions relating to the policy of this government. Three times I have asked him what is the policy of his government on this question. Twice, as usual, he refused to answer questions on policy in this House. I would like him now to answer that question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Leader of the Opposition should be saying I am downgrading the House of

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Commons when I share his opinion. Even the Leader of the Opposition realizes there are some areas of government which might operate in secrecy. Having stated that very wise piece of policy, I read in vain all of his speech on Monday night of last week and found nothing constructive as to what the policy should be for the government on revealing or not revealing what should be kept secret.

If there were a subpoena, and the question is hypothetical, issued to any member of this government, he would be guided by the law officers of the Crown as to what he would be entitled to say or not say under the Official Secrets Act. I can say for my part and the part of all members of my government that we would be anxious to tell the commission everything we knew. However, as the Leader of the Opposition has stated, there may be some areas which must be kept secret and we would be guided by the law officers of the Crown in that regard.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ALLEGED FAILURE OF DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS— POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE OF POLICY FOR ATLANTIC REGION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with a problem equally as pressing to those in the Atlantic provinces. I direct my question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In the words of the minister's colleagues, the regional economic programs of his department have failed. The Economic Council of Canada indicated in its second last report and other working papers that there is a surplus potential for development in the Atlantic provinces which has not been tapped. It can be tapped by an application of fiscal policies far beyond those suggested by the Minister of Finance the other night. Does the minister agree that it is now time to propose to his colleagues the very serious proposition that the basic philosophy and utilization of DREE, AIDA and other programs have failed and suggest a change in basic primary philosophy?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I obviously do not share the hon. member's point of view that the activities of DREE have been a failure. At the APEC meeting in Halifax the other day, the discussion, as I understand it, was that although DREE had not achieved all the expectations, it was not a failure. The support we receive from groups in the Atlantic area will be of great help in achieving solutions and new programs in that area which will help to alleviate unemployment. We are working with the people in the area as well as the provincial government in an attempt to bring in that development.

Mr. Forrestall: Has the minister given consideration to changing the basic program and finding a program to alleviate the very desperate situation with regard to economic development in the Atlantic region? Is he saying that at this time consideration is not being given to the development of a new