

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) will know that there is an equal time tradition in regard to these matters. I would ask him to conclude.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I will bring it to a close in just a moment, Mr. Speaker, and I am conscious of what you are saying.

For the Minister of Justice, having the custody and having a fiduciary position towards Canadians for the proper administration of our laws, to condone and laugh, even laugh at this type of conduct, is something that goes beyond the scope of my particular imagination.

We will read and reflect very carefully upon what the Deputy Prime Minister has said, and I appreciate his bringing it up at an early opportunity. We will govern ourselves accordingly after we have had time to reflect upon what he said.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I might, at the outset, say that had the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen) sought the opportunity simply to make a statement rather than to rise on a point of privilege, I, for one—and I am sure I am speaking on behalf of my colleagues—would have been pleased to have had that opportunity made available.

I can appreciate that understanding is not always easy to come by. I can appreciate that those who might feel that they personally were offended will feel more strongly perhaps from that point of view over the issue of 25 years ago. I want to say, on behalf of my colleagues, that I accept the Deputy Prime Minister's recognition of the inappropriateness of the actions taken 25 years ago. I accept that the Deputy Prime Minister has indicated that not only does he deem that to have been inappropriate, but that he has taken steps over the intervening years to attempt to make sure that such a thing could not happen again.

I had hoped that that statement might have been made on Thursday last. It has caused a great deal of difficulty for a number of people across this country, many of us in the House of Commons, having to come to grips with the defence that was offered at the end of last week. I seriously regret that this matter came to public attention at this point in the way that it did. I do, however, want to say that I share the concern of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) over the statements attributed to, and I believe made by—since I saw them being said—the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie). I consider that to be a very serious matter, and I would ask that at some point that be considered by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in reviewing the events of the last few days. It is quite inappropriate for a Minister of Justice to indicate in any way, shape or form that he might break the law, which certainly could be the inference drawn from the statements made by the Attorney General, the Minister for Justice.

● (1120)

Let me say to the Deputy Prime Minister that the confidence of this House is vitally important. We can disagree on

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issues and how they can be solved. We can disagree on whether better things can be done with regard to unemployment, with regard to the level of the dollar or with regard to interest rates. Those disagreements are fair. But the one thing we can never allow ourselves to disagree over is the quality and standard of conduct that we expect from Members of Parliament, regardless of where and regardless of when, as it affects their public duties.

For that reason, and for no other, I felt compelled to involve myself in the discussion, distasteful though it was. But I am pleased, I must say—I see the Hon. Associate Minister of Defence (Mr. Andre) huffing and sniffing in the background as is his normal practice. I want to tell the Deputy Prime Minister, who knows me well, that I personally, and I think on behalf of all of my colleagues, accept that the matter as far as I am concerned has come to an end.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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POINT OF ORDER

DESIGNATION OF OPPOSITION DAYS

Mr. Speaker: I am in receipt of a request to raise a point of order from the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray).

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a point of order about the method by which this opposition day was designated, and for that matter the way in which the opposition day was designated for tomorrow.

On Friday, approximately 30 minutes before what would have been the normal time of adjournment, a senior advisor of mine received a phone call from a senior advisor of the Government House Leader saying that the Government intended to designate Monday and Tuesday as opposition days.

I am also informed by the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme), who happened to be in the House at that time—I believe he will be speaking as well with respect to this point of order—that he observed a letter being handed to the occupant of the Chair by a representative of the Government, that is to say, within a period of about half an hour before what would have been the time of adjournment.

Opposition days, I am told, were created about 17 years ago. For 17 years, ever since opposition days were added to our procedures, these allotted days have been designated orally in the House, and at least several hours notice has been given, not just a few minutes.

If the way in which, and I coming to a conclusion very shortly, Mr. Speaker, the Government proceeded on Friday is acceptable and continues, it means that it will be very difficult for the Opposition to consider in a proper and deliberate manner what it should do and how it should proceed with respect to the allotted day in question.

There is a time limit within which a motion has to be set down with respect to an allotted day on a Monday. The motion