

**Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to intervene for just a short time on this matter. The Hon. Member opposite who just spoke indicated that the role—and I think he quoted from Beauchesne's but I did not get the citation—of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) was to criticize policy put forward by the Government. That, to me, makes imminent sense. That is precisely what the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow cabinet ministers and members of the Opposition are meant to do. What could not be found in that citation of Beauchesne was that that criticism of policy should involve the compiling of records and information on individual Cabinet Ministers for the express purpose of undermining the ability of Cabinet Ministers to conduct their functions or for carrying out a campaign in the House of personal persecution of individual Cabinet Ministers with information which has been gleaned through brown envelopes, secret memoranda and any other sources of information that the Opposition can collect. That seems to be the kind of thing the Opposition is trying to accuse the Office of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of doing. It is something which we have witnessed in the House for years by members of the Opposition, and they do not find that to be a matter of immorality. It is clear that that has been done by members of the Opposition.

● (1540)

I would like to quote the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark) when he was Leader of the Government in 1979. He appeared before the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee. This can be found at page 9:22 of the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee for November 15, 1979. It is a discussion between the members of that committee and the right hon. gentleman. The passage I wish to read is one where the Hon. Member for Madawaska-Victoria (Mr. Corbin), now Deputy Speaker, was questioning the Right Hon. Member. I quote:

**MR. CORBIN:** —I could go so far as to say that the Prime Minister's Office has a partisan political perspective, since it is difficult to separate partisan feelings from politics.

**MR. CLARK (YELLOWHEAD):** It is difficult to do so now, it has been difficult to do so in the past and it will continue to be a hard thing to do.

**MR. CORBIN:** You therefore intend to uphold the usual practices which have thus far been followed with respect to your Cabinet and the political role played by a number of people in your office?

**MR. CLARK (YELLOWHEAD):** Yes, since that is an essential part of the political role of a Prime Minister under our system. I am both Prime Minister and head of the Party, as was my predecessor and as are all Prime Ministers.

**MR. CORBIN:** Does your Party have separate offices here in Ottawa?

**MR. CLARK (YELLOWHEAD):** Yes.

**MR. CORBIN:** Do you have an office at your Party headquarters?

**MR. CLARK (YELLOWHEAD):** No, I do not.

**MR. CORBIN:** This means that you take care of partisan political matters in the actual office of the Prime Minister, here on the Hill or in the Langevin Building.

**MR. CLARK (YELLOWHEAD):** Yes, just as I did when I was Leader of the Opposition. I assume the present Leader of the Opposition does the same thing.

The Prime Minister's Office, according to the words of the former Prime Minister, carries out partisan political activities by members of the exempt staff of the Prime Minister in the

#### *Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

Prime Minister's Office in the Langevin Block and here on Parliament Hill. Those are precisely the words that were uttered today by the current Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) with regard to his exempt staff.

**Mr. Crombie:** Still wrong.

**Mr. Evans:** The Hon. Member says "still wrong". He is condemning the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead who stood today in righteous indignation and condemned the Prime Minister for doing precisely what he says he was doing in 1979.

I know that offices of Members of Parliament on this Hill, the staff of Members of Parliament on this Hill, watch the newspapers daily, cut articles out of newspapers that have to do with other Members of Parliament, positions they have taken, statements they have made, and keep these on file. They do investigative research, I can say quite frankly and openly, on the past history of other Members of Parliament.

I have been the subject of such an investigation by Members of the Opposition. That is past history, a period before I was a Member of Parliament. That information was not available from newspaper clippings. It was not available from the public record in the Library of Parliament. It was obtained somewhere else. That has gone on in offices of Opposition Members of Parliament.

The Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) quoted from Erskine May and from Mr. Sharp about the role of public servants. The fundamental confusion that he is making is the same fundamental confusion that was made by the Leader of the Opposition the other day. There is a fundamental difference between people who are under the Public Service Employment Act, who are permanent full-time public servants, and members of the exempt staff of Ministers and members of the staff of Members of Parliament. They are not public servants as defined by the Hon. Member in his citations from Beauchesne's, Erskine May and his quotes from former Ministers of this place. It is absolutely true and absolutely essential that the public service, as defined by the Public Service Employment Act, be impartial, that it serve the Government of the day and that it be apolitical. That is not the same thing. Indeed, that is why the staff we are talking about here today is called the exempt staff. They are partisan. They are hired on a partisan basis.

I know for sure that the Leader of the Opposition would not hire a Liberal or a Member of the NDP in his office. He hires Tories—partisan hiring practices. That is why they are exempt staff. They are supposed to do partisan things. That is why they cannot be public servants. The Public Service Employment Act expressly forbids that kind of behaviour.

We are talking here about the exempt staff. I do not draw a distinction, as the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) did, between the Office of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition because, under our parliamentary system, the Leader of the Opposition is the Prime Minister in waiting. If the Hon. Member for Rosedale is saying that it is all right for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition to