

*Oral Questions*

referred to in the press, was between the principals involved and Hydromega.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Again the minister chose his words with care. The issue in the part of the act that I quoted is not whether the department officials were influenced. It is whether a member of Parliament was attempting to be influenced. If the senator does that, it is in clear violation of the act.

I would like to ask the minister to come clean with the House on that. Did he ask the members in question whether the subject under discussion at that meeting arranged by Senator Cogger concerned the money. That is the issue.

**Mr. Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I am choosing my words carefully because I want to be very accurate. I take it that the hon. member expects that of me and I expect that of him.

I asked the member in question and the description of the meeting that I referred to is accurate. It is exactly as he gave it to me.

The last point that I would make is this. So that there is no confusion or that people in the House say that I have not given the full details, members of Parliament, the questioner or anyone in this House, may make representations to a department as to when approval will be given to a project. I think we do that regularly as members of Parliament, asking for information about projects in our ridings as to the status or whether or not they will be approved.

• (1430)

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I have certainly drawn my conclusion from what the minister said because once again he did not deal with the issue. The issue is whether—and that is what would be the violation of the act—the senator obtained a fee for having a conversation with a Member of Parliament to try to influence that Member of Parliament in obtaining funds or a grant for the company in question. That was the issue at stake, and for the third time the minister failed to deal with that.

[Translation]

My last question is directed to the Prime Minister of Canada. Today, the *Globe and Mail* reported a member of

the Conservative Caucus as suggesting he was a participant in a conversation about a contract with the federal government, and that this conversation had been arranged by a senator. Is this process acceptable to the Prime Minister of Canada, yes or no?

[English]

**Mr. Epp:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the senator has denied that allegation. I referred to that denial earlier.

In my conversation with the Member of Parliament I received every denial that he was not involved in any of the allegations that are made, and Mr. Cogger has very categorically denied the allegations.

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It concerns the subject of double standards in the handling of this latest chapter of ongoing Tory cronyism, the Michel Cogger affair.

On January 20, 1987, in response to allegations of wrongdoing against then senator designate Jean Bazin, the Prime Minister said, and I quote from page 2449 of *Hansard*:

—the same facts were brought to my attention and I immediately asked for a police investigation. And no one will receive special treatment in this respect: neither you nor I nor Mr. Bazin — The only way to see justice done is to ask the RCMP to conduct a complete and independent investigation.

My question is this. How long has the Prime Minister and this government been aware of possible wrongdoing in this particular case? Will he now tell the House that he will order a full RCMP investigation into these allegations?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)):** Mr. Speaker, I believe this question was already raised a few minutes ago. In the circumstances, in the light of the allegations that have been made, I can only repeat that the RCMP informed us this morning that it was checking all the facts to see whether there was a case for investigating the matter further. I think this is entirely normal in the circumstances, and it is not up to the Solicitor General or any other minister to interfere with the RCMP's work. We must let the RCMP do its job.