

Oral Questions

Mr. Forrestall: Why not?

Mr. Speaker: Everyone just calm down, please. The Hon. Member knows there is an implication in the second part of his question which is improper and I simply invite him to rephrase it. Only the question without that part.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Forrestall: Talk about charades!

Mr. Skelly: —my second question to the Prime Minister is: Does the Prime Minister know the price of defending a lie?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, come on!

Mr. Mazankowski: That is way out of order!

Mr. Skelly: The loss is honour. The loss is the integrity of his Government.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Why don't you sit down?

Mr. Skelly: Does he know that it is a very serious problem?

An Hon. Member: You are wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is skating very close and he knows it. It is not proper—

Mr. Forrestall: He thinks he is walking on water right now.

Mr. Speaker: It is not proper—order, please. All Members, order, please! What is improper is not made proper by yelling about it.

The Hon. Member is skating very close to the line. He knows it is improper to do indirectly what cannot be done directly. Making an accusation of that sort with regard to character is improper in this House. I, therefore, invite him to withdraw the earlier question and put a simple question of fact if he has one.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, the simple question of fact is—

Some Hon. Members: Withdraw!

Mr. Skelly: —that a Minister of the Crown has given contradictory—

Some Hon. Members: Withdraw!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Port au Port-St. Barbe.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, the issue before this Parliament today is not about tainted tuna.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Tobin: Any more than the issue more than a decade ago in the U.S. was about a bungled break-in at Democratic headquarters.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: I repeat the question my colleague attempted to put to the Prime Minister. Given the Prime Minister's challenge yesterday that anyone who contradicts his version of truth should put his seat on the line, will he inform this House whether or not the Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte has resigned, or how does he explain the statement made this morning by a member of his caucus?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): The statement I made yesterday applies to any Member of this House irrespective of where he sits. I can tell my hon. friend that the Member of Parliament to whom he refers has since—

Mr. Ouellet: Changed his mind.

Mr. Mulroney: —issued a statement which substantially alters the impact of the first statement. I can tell my hon. friend that he has not been here. He has, as I understand it, been ill. Apparently this is sort of funny to the NDP.

Mr. Andre: He has never been to caucus this year; he is ill.

Mr. Mulroney: The statement was that this came up in September. The Hon. Member in question has been ill and not been in Ottawa since last June.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

ROLE OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I have the greatest respect for the Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte. I sat on the Fisheries Committee with him for four years. He has a very sharp mind and he fights hard for his area. I believe he raised the matter in caucus—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: You believe?

Mr. Tobin: —and I ask the Prime Minister again—

Mr. Kempling: He wasn't here.

Mr. Tobin: I ask the Prime Minister again. How can he square the fact that both the Minister of Fisheries and the Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte have issued clarifying statements under pressure from his office? Does that not represent a very dangerous and frightening pattern of Members being pressured by his office to conform to the Prime Minister's idea—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!