

Oral Questions

his constituents, "Look, do not bother with the dogs. Try to get some public works done, aqueducts—"

Mr. Waddell: You are the Prime Minister. It's your program.

Mr. Trudeau: Oh, yes, and that is what I am telling the people. However, it is hard to get through to the Hon. Member. Fortunately, some fourth grade people understand what we are doing.

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AIR CANADA

INVESTIGATION BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. In view of some of the incredible, recent revelations about financial and corporate machinations in Montreal, could the Minister, who is responsible for Air Canada, please stand in this House and tell us what the devil is going on in Air Canada in Montreal, with the RCMP raids on the office of the Chairman of the Board, and also on his office in Quebec?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I was told by the Minister of Justice that he would answer this question because it is essentially his domain, so I will let him do that.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, it is the long standing custom not to answer questions—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan:—concerning investigations which may be under way or thought to be under way.

LEASING OF HEADQUARTERS

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport as well, since it comes directly within his jurisdiction. Can he shed some light on what is transpiring, without getting into the details of an investigation, and certainly assure the House that the present investigation has nothing whatsoever to do with Canadair or the Mackasey hearings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections and, with more particular specifics, advise as to whether the investigation is directed against Mr. Rene Amyot—

Mr. Ouellet: Speculative questions.

Mr. Nowlan:—as the former director and secretary of Place Quebec Incorporated, which sold its interest to Trizec Company, which received the successful award on the building to which Air Canada has just transferred its headquarters?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will try. I have been asked a number of questions,

by a number of newspapermen in particular. One asks, "What does it have to do with this?" And the other one asks, "Does it have to do with that?" And another one asks, "Does it have to do with this?" If I answer all these questions, people will have to know what it has to do with.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: We have a right to know.

Mr. Pepin: That is what the problem is. I am told by the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General that this is an RCMP inquiry, and I must not get involved in it because that is their business, and if I open my mouth on the subject I will be compromising the validity of an inquiry. I just thought I had to explain that, in order to get across to my hon. friend why I am saying nothing as opposed to my normal tendency, which is to tell him the whole truth. My hon. friend knows how much I like to answer questions he poses to me in committees and elsewhere. In this particular instance I must be abnormal, by my standards, and shut up.

Mr. Nowlan: We'll see how abnormal it is on Monday.

Mr. Nielsen: It must be Friday.

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COMMUNICATIONS

IMPOSITION OF TAX ON TELEVISION CABLE SYSTEMS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications. This week's federal budget imposed a new 6 per cent tax on cable. In addition to the cable rate increases which were permitted under the six and five program, which are being charged to cable customers, how does the Minister square this increase year over year, which is roughly double the six and five program, with the various injunctions from Cabinet Ministers that ordinary Canadians must tighten their belts?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows full well that this has nothing to do with the six and five program. It is a question of the tax increase which was brought down by the Minister of Finance to raise general revenues. There is, as a result of the raising of these general revenues, a program production fund which has been set up which will total some \$60 million a year and which will bring about a good deal of employment for Canadians who are engaged in creative work, particularly people in the artistic or cultural community in Canada.

I think that on all sides of the House there are people who want to say that they are delighted that we have indeed been able, perhaps for the first time in our history, to put as much money at the disposal of the private sector in the area of film production. I expect that this fund of \$60 million will lead to the creation of over \$180 million annually in new program