

Adjournment Debate

up their seat at the cabinet table. They have an obligation to their constituents to stand up and be counted.

Mr. David Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think it important to bear in mind what the Right Hon. Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) comments relate to in his answer to the hon. member on May 18. They relate to the hearing process which took place recently in Montreal. It is important that emphasis should be placed on the words which were repeatedly used throughout the Prime Minister's answer, namely, that it was a consultative process.

We have ten Members of Parliament who decided to undertake hearings to listen to what interested parties had to say with regard to various government policies in a co-ordinated way. Those comments were expressed in various locations in eastern Montreal.

Surely the hon. member would not suggest, and I do not believe he has suggested, that the eight members of Parliament who are not ministers should be in any way constrained from doing that. In fact, you could say it is probably their duty, which all Members of Parliament have, to hear what their constituents have to say on whatever issues constituents want to bring to their attention.

I would suggest that the same rights, privileges and duties also apply to the two ministers involved. They may well have been wearing two hats. They would be listening to the representations made to them through this consultative process as Members of Parliament but also as ministers of the Crown.

I had an opportunity to discuss the process that took place with the Minister of National Health and Welfare earlier this evening. She advised me those consultations were successful, that a good listening process had occurred. I think there were opportunities which enabled them to clarify certain government programs and to familiarize those who were making representations on a wide range of topics with what the government has been doing with regard to their concerns.

I do not think we have heard anything here tonight that would suggest the two ministers in question were not supporting government policies throughout this consultative process. There is no evidence of that whatsoever. The hon. member suggested they were doing this or that; they were disagreeing with government policy, etc. He may or may not be correct if the hypotheses set out had occurred. The fact is they did not occur. The consultative process occurred in which ten Members of Parliament, two of whom happen to be ministers, heard what the people from the area they represent had to say on a wide variety of topics. That is a good process and it is probably something more of us should be doing more often. I commend them for having done it. There has been no suggestion whatsoever that anything they said could in any way be taken as disagreeing with government policy. They were there to listen, and they did; they were there to explain, and they did. If anything, I think they should be commended for taking such an initiative.

• (2220)

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY—ALLEGATIONS OF CIA PAYMENTS TO CANADIAN ELECTION CANDIDATES. (B) REQUEST THAT COMMITTEE STUDY ALLEGED CIA INVOLVEMENT IN CANADIAN ELECTIONS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, May 19, I asked a question of the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) concerning certain activities on the part of the CIA in Canada between the years 1970 and 1976. I indicated in my question to the Solicitor General that in 1976 a Mr. John Meier of British Columbia, a former associate of Howard Hughes and a man very knowledgeable about the operations of CIA both inside and outside Canada, met with British Columbia Senator Ray Perrault and, following that meeting, met with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) here in Ottawa. At that time in 1976 Mr. Meier provided Senator Perrault with extensive documentation and tapes concerning allegations of CIA penetration of Canadian security services and, as well, very serious allegations of funding by the CIA of specific election campaigns and candidates in the provinces of Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan during the years 1970 to 1976.

Last Wednesday I asked that the Solicitor General confirm that, as a result of the allegations made by Mr. Meier, the Prime Minister ordered a secret investigation by one Pierre Genest, a Toronto lawyer. I urged that the Solicitor General confirm that inquiry and make public the results of it.

In response to my question at approximately 2.45 p.m., the Solicitor General indicated that he had no information on that subject at all. He said:

I hope to be able to look into it and comment on it shortly.

That was despite the fact that the previous morning in the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs I had given the Solicitor General a copy of a petition which, I informed him, I intended to table following question period the next day, as well as a copy of a lengthy document which I indicated I intended to question him on the following day. As of 2.45 on Wednesday afternoon we have the Solicitor General saying that he knows nothing whatsoever about this inquiry ordered by the Prime Minister.

Following up on that question and assuming that the Solicitor General was accurate in his reply, I urged that the government order a comprehensive study of these allegations by the justice committee; in other words, that the Solicitor General give the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs a reference to study the question of CIA involvement in Canada, not just during the years 1970 to 1976, but at all relevant periods until the present time. I urged that the committee have the power to hear witnesses, including John Meier, who is presently under a warrant of extradition to California which is being appealed, and that it have the power to question Mr. Pierre Genest to determine how it was that he was appointed to conduct this investigation on the part of the Prime Minister's office, what his qualifications were aside from being a prominent Liberal in the city of Toronto, what