

ic Party, the House set itself into session, pursuant to Standing Order 26, at eight o'clock on Monday night of this week to debate the allegations against the RCMP as a general subject. That was ordered, and it gave the House the opportunity to have a full exposé of all points of view on both sides of the House with respect to that matter. This is not the time to rehash that or to carry the debate further forward.

The question before the House is a narrow question of privilege which was raised by the hon. member for Peace River and relates to the remarks today of the Prime Minister. I will examine those remarks in their full context; firstly, the remarks made during the question period, and secondly the subsequent remarks made by the Prime Minister in response to a later question as to whether or not the Prime Minister had any evidence in support of the allegation, or whatever, which he made during the question period. I will then see whether or not he has transgressed any of the privileges or practices of the House, and I will deal with the matter when the House resumes on Monday.

[Translation]

MR. OUELLET—ALLEGATIONS MADE BY MR. LAWRENCE

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I must tell you that I take the first opportunity to raise this matter. It relates to some comments which have been made on two occasions earlier this week by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). I tried to contact the office of the hon. member to let him know that I would raise this matter but he had already left.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Surely hon. members in the centre of the House realize that it is impossible for the Chair to hear the question of privilege raised by the Minister of State for Urban Affairs unless there is quiet in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that you asked opposition members to keep quiet, because they seem to believe that only what they have to say is important and they refuse to listen to answers the government is prepared to give them. I quote the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham:

The Minister of State for Urban Affairs in the House late last spring indicated that as the chief political organizer for the Liberal party in Quebec he had in his possession a list of all known separatist sympathizers in the province of Quebec.

Now, this remark made by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, as recorded on page 515 of *Hansard*, is totally unjustified. I have checked into the index of the House of Commons debates for the period from October 12, 1976 to August 9, 1977. I scrutinized all the official reports of the debates to check if it slipped my memory and if I really made that remark, but nowhere in the index in the House of Commons debates is there a reference to the remarks attributed to me by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence). I find this allegation completely unacceptable

Privilege—Mr. Ouellet

and incorrect and I hope the hon. member will withdraw his inappropriate comments when he returns to the House.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this matter affects me particularly in my privileges as a member of this House. This is again an attempt at sending trial balloons and reflects the allegations made these last few days by members opposite who have become past masters at brewing storms in tea cups. Mr. Speaker, they remind me of a colony of termites ferociously attacking the rotten beam of a bridge while workers are busy installing a new one. I find their remarks bewildering, be they the incorrect allegations of the hon. member from Northumberland-Durham or the false allegations which were made in this House concerning the brazen and faulty speculation of the members of the opposition who are trying to make people believe that they are the victims of electronic surveillance when there is no evidence of it. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that all these matters will be cleared up.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton rising on the question of privilege?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege raised by the hon. Minister of "Bal-loons"—I mean, Urban Affairs.

Mr. Chrétien: You look like a big one yourself.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I am very happy to learn that the minister has searched the record of the House of Commons. I seem to recall a statement which was recorded in the press in which I thought he had said, in the city of Montreal, relative to Radio-Canada, that he had a list of separatists.

Mr. McGrath: Yes, it was in the press.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): My hon. friend from Newfoundland confirms that it was, indeed, reported, so probably the minister would not find it in the record of the House of Commons. However, he might find it if he checks his press clippings in the parliamentary library or some other place. It had reference to Radio-Canada; my memory has now been refreshed.

In any event, I am sorry that the minister has decided that the ordinary and reasonable use of the question period by the opposition to probe the abominations of this government is an inconvenience to him. I just want to assure him that we intend to use the legitimate and ordinary rules of this House on every occasion, whether the responsibility is that of the Prime Minister, the Solicitor General, or even the Minister of State for Urban Affairs—who is known in other places as the "corporal from Quebec"—so we can deal with things which we think are wrong with this government.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): So far as the question of privilege is concerned—