

The second person involved, a second secret agent, to use the words of the Opposition, is a certain Mr. Cadieux. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cadieux is not a secret agent! He is a student, and he obtained a certain amount of money to do some public research as a summer job. He did not operate from a secret place and in an underhanded manner to make a covert inquiry as a secret agent into the private life of the Leader of the Opposition. He is merely a student who, as summer employment, did some research work on a public company, Iron Ore, and on the situation in Schefferville, since this had been used by the Leader of the Opposition. He conducted this research from the University of Ottawa library.

Those are the only facts before us. It is quite ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, for the Hon. Member for Yukon to get all excited and give the same pat retorts to the clear, specific and simple answers which were given by the Deputy Prime Minister and which correspond with the facts.

I do not think that either Mr. Crenna or Mr. Cadieux are secret agents. They are two individuals who were acting quite legitimately in carrying out their legitimate and normal duties and who operated in public, seeking public information on a public company, period. Nothing in the facts before us, Mr. Speaker, would lead us to suspect that someone could have investigated the private life of a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the one and only thing to do to settle the complaint made in this House on behalf of the Hon. Member for Central Nova is to refer to a precedent. Curiously enough, this precedent concerns a complaint made by the predecessor of the Leader of the Opposition, the former Member for Central Nova, Mr. MacKay.

[English]

It is a coincidence, perhaps, that twice in a row we are facing the same Tory tactic, a frivolous attempt to waste the time of the House. In 1977, the former Hon. Member for Central Nova raised a question of privilege. He seemed to be obfuscated and it was found he was totally wrong and that the facts were contrary to his allegation.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that in 1977 the Tory tactic was to allege that Members of Parliament were being subjected to surveillance by mail tampering, wiretapping and bugging of offices. They brought forward only two so-called "solid" cases. In the mail tampering case, the matter referred to a weird "postcard" which turned out to be an unstamped, incorrectly addressed, plasticized computer card which the postmaster, having read the message, referred to the RCMP. In the bugging case, Mr. MacKay, the former Member of Parliament for Central Nova, the predecessor of the Leader of the Opposition and now his senior adviser, hired a Toronto detective to check his office. The detective claimed to have discovered a listening device in the office and, as a result of Mr. MacKay's complaint, the Speaker called in the police. The police found that the device was phony and that it had been planted by the detective. The detective was prosecuted, convicted and fined, as well as being deprived of his licence.

*Privilege—Mr. Nielsen*

That is the previous case which was brought to the attention of the House by the adviser to the Leader of the Opposition, the former Hon. Member for Central Nova.

Today we have the complaint regarding the new Hon. Member for Central Nova, which is, in my view, almost as frivolous. What we have witnessed today is a tactic to try to build up a crisis in the House. I do not know why. Perhaps the Tories do not like the anniversary of their defeat four years ago. Certainly, however, their attempt was totally destroyed by the very clear, simple and brilliant answers given by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) today to each of their questions.

There are absolutely no facts in this case which would allow us to believe that there might have been an inquiry into the private life of any Hon. Member. On the contrary, the facts are very clear and very simple. One employee in a political office was doing his job, seeking public documents from a public bureau, from a public commission, dealing with a public company, the Iron Ore Company of Canada. The student was working during the summer from the library of the University of Ottawa to find out what had happened in Schefferville and dealing with facts with respect to the Iron Ore Company.

All this is public, the gathering of press clippings, the gathering of facts in relation to a public company. There is nothing which should allow you, Mr. Speaker, to suspect that there might have been a private inquiry into the private life of any Hon. Member of the House. I suggest that this attempt today has been undermined very seriously by the Deputy Prime Minister in his very straight answers which were based on the very simple facts. This attempt should not be encouraged. I believe you should set aside this frivolous so-called question of privilege.

I should like to refer you, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, to Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, the usual reference, Citation 19, which is very clear. It indicates to a Speaker that when Members disagree on facts, this cannot be the basis of a question of privilege. What we are witnessing here is the Opposition Members pretending that there are facts indicating to you, Mr. Speaker, that there has been an inquiry by secret agents into the private life of the Leader of the Opposition or of any other Hon. Member. That is not the case. This was firmly denied by the Deputy Prime Minister.

Moreover, to the intelligent question posed by the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent), the Deputy Prime Minister was very straightforward and gave a very clear, unequivocal answer. The Deputy Prime Minister was asked if there was an inquiry going on with respect to any private Hon. Member of the House, and he replied, no. I believe his word should be taken and this should close the matter.

It is a shame that the Opposition is insisting at this time on trying to ride a dead horse and waste the time of the House, when in fact there was nothing wrong in this whole dossier. It was merely two individuals doing their jobs, doing them well, in a very open way, and dealing merely with public facts, public documents, public commissions and a public company.