

Routine Proceedings

pointed Bruce Phillips and John Grace without even listening to the concerns of Parliament on this issue.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, these are excellent questions. I gather this will be a lengthy debate. I hope that during the course of the afternoon and evening we will have answers to those from the government which really is more in a position to answer.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment in relation to the remarks of the hon. member for York Centre.

As I read the Privacy Act, it is all about the processes involved in the disclosure of information. It is not about the exact carriage of information. The member gave the impression to those who were listening that the Privacy Commissioner delves into banks of information and transmits information to other people. That really is not, in any serious way, the role of the Privacy Commissioner. The Privacy Commissioner looks at requests for information that is held in the banks controlled under the Privacy Act and decides whether those requests shall or shall not be granted.

To see the Privacy Commissioner as someone who, in his or her own personal capacity, has information at their disposal is wrong because in fact this information is gathered by other Crown officers. It is gathered by heads of departments and held in privacy banks and the Privacy Commissioner is not the only one with access to that information.

If the member's concerns were legitimate, he would be concerned with every person in the Public Service who has access to the information, not just the Privacy Commissioner. In that respect you have to rely on the honour and integrity of everybody involved in this system, not just one person.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree. I hope I did not create the impression that the Privacy Commissioner is a collector of information. Take, for example, a former inmate in a who prison wants to know whether his cellmate made certain statements about him which are on the records of Corrections Canada. I am speaking here of things I know from my own personal experience as a former Solicitor General. The Privacy Commissioner can go through the record of what stool-pigeons

inside the prison have told officials about the the former inmate who is asking for the information.

So it could well turn out that the Privacy Commissioner will find out that a former inmate engaged in certain activities inside the prison. This may be someone who is pardoned now and that information, in some circumstances, can be of political interest. That is my point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. On debate, the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Burnaby—Kingsway, who would normally be our first speaker on this, permitting me to put my remarks on the record on this absolutely outrageous set of appointments.

The issue is not so much Mr. Grace's personal appointment, which this House can approve, but the effect this has on Inger Hansen who has served the position and the country well in her present position and has not deserved the treatment she has received from this government.

Far more outrageous is the appointment of Bruce Phillips and the way in which the government has been handling this. First of all, let us go back to 1983 when the appointments of both of these people, Inger Hansen and John Grace, were put to this House and received the unanimous consent of all parties.

In *Hansard* we see the late Walter Baker speaking enthusiastically on behalf of the Conservative Party for both of these appointments and my friend, the present member for Burnaby—Kingsway, speaking on behalf of our party. These appointments were made not only in consultation with all parties in this House, but with the agreement of all parties in this House.

The Minister of Justice will know from her experience in British Columbia that when it comes to the appointment of an ombudsman, the unanimous consent of even the fractiously partisan legislature of British Columbia is sought.

Here the government not only tries to foist its own particular view of who should have this job, in the name of Bruce Phillips, but the minister's justification indicates that she clearly fails to understand the importance of this position to the people of this country and to this Parliament.