

Oral Questions

our NATO representative a man who in the past acted in such a deplorable manner showing a total lack of integrity?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member states that he has evidence allegedly showing that the Minister indulged in electronic eavesdropping.

Such a statement is absolutely false and the Minister has just made a categorical denial about it.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister.

Did the Prime Minister read the transcript of those notes, or—

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I had not recognized a supplementary question until I could hear it carefully. A supplementary question now, please.

INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just said there were absolutely no facts to substantiate these accusations. Did he read the transcript of the interview with the Deputy Prime Minister, or did he listen to the tape which is the voice of the Deputy Prime Minister implicating himself directly?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I read it and thought carefully. From this, I concluded that, contrary to my hon. friend, there is no suggestion that the Minister was in any way responsible for or caused to happen any electronic eavesdropping for which he was directly or indirectly responsible that would in any way be illegal or improper under any circumstances.

Mr. Nunziata: It's immoral.

Mr. Mulroney: Of all Members, this Member talking about immorality should be struck by a bolt of lightning right on the spot.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION INTO
EAVESDROPPING IN 1973

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I also must direct a question to the Prime Minister about this matter. On October 17, 1973, the present Deputy Prime Minister, speaking to a request by the New Democratic Party for a review of a bugging that occurred in our caucus room, asked:

—that Your Honour—

That is, the Speaker:

—cause a further investigation to be made into the whole matter of eavesdropping—

He went on to say:

This offence is serious enough to require the offender to come before the bar of the House and give an explanation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is getting long, that is all.

Mr. Deans: Given that the Deputy Prime Minister knew full well that he had been the recipient of eavesdropping information with regard to the Liberal caucus at that time, does he not think that the advice given by the Deputy Prime Minister should be taken now, and that all of those involved in providing the information to the Deputy Prime Minister should be brought before the bar of the House to explain their actions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, my memory goes back a little further than that of the Hon. Member asking the question on this subject.

The first time the matter arose in the House of Commons was in the neighborhood of 22 years ago, to my knowledge. Indeed, it was raised by the then Leader of the NDP, Mr. Tommy Douglas, when the Chair asserted jurisdiction with respect to that matter and caused an investigation to be held. There have been at least two investigations subsequently that I can recall by Mr. Speaker, so that the idea of bringing unnamed persons before the bar of the House with respect to unsupported allegations is one which you should not, Sir, support, and which certainly falls within your jurisdiction.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: If hon. gentlemen opposite have a specific charge to make, then they should make it and take the consequences if they fail to prove it.

• (1425)

RECEIPT OF CAUCUS INFORMATION—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. It is not necessary to make a charge. The Deputy Prime Minister has admitted that he was the recipient of information obtained out of a caucus room that he listened to himself and had translated.

In light of the admission of the Deputy Prime Minister—it is not a question of did he or didn't he, he did—does the Prime Minister not feel it would be appropriate now for the Deputy Prime Minister to step down from his position until such time as an inquiry is held into this affair and the results of it become known?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it could very well be that the Deputy Prime Minister, who is referring to information that may have been imparted to him by a caucus member dissatisfied with the way things were going in the caucus at that time—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!