

Inquiries of the Ministry

My point of order is that the telephones on Parliament Hill fall within your jurisdiction, not within the jurisdiction of the RCMP. To be fair and factual to the House, the Solicitor General must reply in answer to that question that the RCMP have not tapped telephones on Parliament Hill; otherwise he is in contempt of Parliament and of every Member of Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peters: I do not object to playing around with wiretapping, and the minister can be as flippant as he wishes in this regard, but I think this is a much more serious proposition. If someone should say that the RCMP had members of your staff or some such thing it would not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has sought the floor on a point of order. He has made his point of order and certainly it is well taken in that any activity on the Hill is a direct responsibility of hon. members, exercised through the Chair. There is no question whatsoever that if hon. members want to know if there is any such activity being conducted, an inquiry would have to be made, I assume through the Chair, in so far as the House of Commons is concerned. In this respect, I should think an inquiry should be directed in the usual way, according to the prescriptions of the Standing Orders and the practice of the House.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak to the point of order. At the time the Chair was occupied by your predecessor there was one such inquiry made, and during Your Honour's term another such inquiry was made. I am wondering whether I would be in order in asking that the results of both those inquiries be made known to members of the House and, since the matter has been raised again, that Your Honour undertake a further inquiry to ensure that this activity is not being conducted.

Mr. Speaker: The question is an interesting one, although it is not put in the usual way. We could get into rather odd and difficult situations if hon. members during the question period, whether on a point of order or a question of privilege, requested the Chair to undertake investigations. The hon. member is quite right when he says that inquiries were made. He is one of those who, some years ago, requested that such an inquiry be made, and that request was made in the appropriate way. In view of the fact that the matter has been raised by hon. members, and certainly in view of the fact that it is one of interest to hon. members on both sides of the House in all parties, I would certainly consider it my duty to look into the matter in the manner suggested by hon. members.

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[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

ALLEGED BUGGING BY ELECTRONIC DEVICE OF RESIDENCE OF ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE SOCIETY OFFICIAL

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Solicitor General—keeping in mind the answer he

[Mr. Peters.]

gave me last Tuesday—if he could state in this chamber that federal police has never bugged Mr. Cossette's residence in Repentigny and, should he answer in the negative, when will the RCMP be allowed to take possession of the device which has been inadvertently misplaced in Mr. Cossette's home?

Mr. Speaker: It seems the hon. member is substantially reiterating a question which has been put a few days ago and I should point out that I do not remember exactly the answer given by the Minister at the time. If the hon. minister wishes to add something to his answer of last Tuesday, he may have the floor but it seems to me the hon. member is only repeating the question he already asked.

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member seeking the floor on a question of privilege?

Mr. La Salle: I wish to remind the Chair that if I repeated the question it is because I have yet to receive a valid answer; I have been told that if someone happens to lose a pencil it is not the duty of the RCMP to go and pick it up; I wonder if the RCMP would not have lost a bug in Mr. Cossette's residence. If this were the case, I think the hon. minister would be in a position to answer my question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member suggests he is not satisfied with the answer he received but I do not think he is entitled to ask the question anew.

The hon. member may rephrase his question at some other time if he seeks additional information. Even if the question has been put to the minister yesterday, I do not see why the hon. member should keep asking the same question as long as he does not get a satisfactory answer.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

KEEPING OF DOSSIERS ON MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT BY ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE—ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): I have a supplementary question to the Solicitor General. In view of the increasing accumulation of these files and dossiers, I wonder whether he could indicate to the House what steps are taken to verify the accuracy of the information and to protect the rights of the individual who may not be aware that information is being accumulated about him which may not be entirely accurate?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it seems that pretending there is a dossier or that electronic devices are being used in an office or an apartment becomes a question of social status. I reply to the hon. member that he must first tell me he is sure of having a dossier before being able to have a look at it.