

Oral Questions

A court decides if you have reasonable and probable cause to do it. If you break in without a warrant, a citizen lays a charge and the police are found guilty. So this is control on the criminal side—

That was a statement made by the Prime Minister. Can the Solicitor General tell this House how a court will ever find out about a secret and illegal break-in, keeping in mind the fact that a court cannot do anything until evidence is gathered and a charge laid? I think it is important that the House knows whether the new Solicitor General agrees with the Prime Minister.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, evidently it is a very important statement, and I would like to read it in full. I will comment on it at some future time.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**NATIONAL INDIAN BROTHERHOOD—ALLEGED SURVEILLANCE BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): I should like to ask the Solicitor General whether his immediate predecessor in office, once removed, was ever informed of the surveillance activities against the National Indian Brotherhood?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I will take the hon. member's question as notice.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, when the minister does that, will he also determine, for members of the House, whether the present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, when he was holding the portfolio of solicitor general, was aware of the approval by the security services of the use of FBI agent Douglas Durham in infiltrating the National Indian Brotherhood. Was he aware of any agent provocateur activities carried out by Mr. Durham?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, without accepting the premise of the hon. gentleman's question, I will take it as notice as well and provide him with a reply in due course.

MCDONALD INQUIRY—ALLEGED DISCREDITING BY GOVERNMENT FOR POLITICAL GAIN

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): I direct my question to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Trudeau: Big guns.

Mr. Alexander: Not big guns.

Mr. Trudeau: Take your hand out of your pocket.

Mr. Alexander: I will keep my hand in my pocket as long as the Prime Minister leans over his desk and points. I am a little confused right now because the Prime Minister has indicated that the opposition is discrediting the royal commission when it asks questions on the matter of the RCMP and national security. On the other hand, the Prime Minister, through his

[Mr. Fraser.]

yet to be tried Solicitor General, has indicated in no uncertain terms that he is going to introduce a bill dealing with the opening of the mail. I want to know if the Prime Minister can rationalize that statement, and I charge the Prime Minister with deliberately discrediting the royal commission for political gain.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not say that opposition questioning would discredit the royal commission.

Mr. Alexander: Yes; I copied it down.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I said the assertion made by the hon. gentleman's leader, that royal commissions were only emanations of the executive, and the inference that we could not trust them, tended to discredit the royal commission. That is what I said.

Mr. Clark: You said it; do not apply your inference to me.

Mr. Trudeau: In so far as questioning by the opposition of the government, of the Solicitor General, on what is going on before the royal commission, I am not saying that is discrediting the royal commission; I am saying it is proving the unwisdom of the opposition, as in the example just given. If we have two people who say opposite things, the commissioner and, according to the interpretation of the opposition, the witness of last week, what is to be the government's position?

Mr. Clark: Find out.

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition says we should find out.

Mr. Clark: Right.

Mr. Trudeau: He is suggesting, therefore, the government should do its investigation of witnesses; that we should reach a conclusion and decide which of two witnesses should be disciplined. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is suggesting that the government should do the job that the royal commission has been set up to do, and that is a contradictory position.

An hon. Member: Rubbish.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Alexander: In light of the fact that the Prime Minister wants us to wait until the commission has done the job which it has been charged to do, would the Prime Minister now like to reconsider the introduction of the bill which would legalize the opening of the mail? You cannot have it both ways. In view of the concern which the Prime Minister has, and because of the importance of the findings of the commission and in order that this House will know which direction to take, will the Prime Minister now state that he has changed his mind? Also, in order to be consistent, will the Prime Minister wait until we are all apprised of the findings of the commission? Does he not think that is the proper approach to take to this very serious matter?