

Oral Questions

Mr. Trudeau: Presumably *The Gazette* obtained it from the public record. I know that somebody in my office, I think impressed by the Leader of the Opposition when he makes these speeches about "and I know what it is to pay a mortgage"—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: So somebody in my office wanted to know how much he was paying on his mortgage.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: And they went to the public registry.

Mr. Blackburn: How would you know what it is like to pay a mortgage?

Mr. Trudeau:—which the press is doing all the time on my own house in Montreal. So what?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Who sent *The Gazette*?

Mr. Trudeau: Who sent *The Gazette*, the Hon. Member for Yellowhead says.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: We have another question here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: The Hon. Member for Kingston says they have suspicions because of a certain letter which the Minister of Finance talked about. What research bureau permitted the Hon. Member for Yukon to refer to a letter that the president of Iron Ore had received from the then Minister of this Government? Who gave him that?

Mr. Chrétien: Who gave the permission?

Mr. Trudeau: Was it Mr. Mulroney, or was it his research bureau, who looked into the files and found the correspondence, not with the Leader of the Opposition but with the president of Iron Ore, the great administrator of Iron Ore?

Mr. Chrétien: Who closed the mine?

Mr. Trudeau: And who closed the mine?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DISPATCH OF OFFICIAL TO WASHINGTON

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, keeping a clipping file is one thing, but using the powerful instruments of the state to pry into the lives of private individuals is quite another.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: And the Prime Minister does not distinguish between the role of the research offices of Members of Parliament and his role as the head of the Government and chief adviser to the Crown, and the instruments, the powerful instruments, that he has at his disposal in that capacity.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Has and uses.

Mr. McGrath: What really is involved here, Mr. Speaker, is an abuse of those powers. I want to ask the Prime Minister, if there is nothing wrong with this operation, can he tell the House why it was necessary to send David Crenna to Washington, as was indicated yesterday by the Acting Prime Minister, to obtain from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission the annual report of the Iron Ore Company of Canada and other information in the public domain, all of which, by the way, is readily available from the Library of Parliament? And I got it this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: And anything else in the public domain in the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission could have been obtained through the office of our embassy. Why then was it necessary to send Mr. David Crenna to Washington?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): First, I must return to the preamble of the question where the Hon. Member suggests that we use the powerful instruments of the state to compile secret information. Those facts are not right, Mr. Speaker. The powerful instruments of the state do not exist in this particular case. It is the research bureau of the Liberal caucus. It is the exempt staff of the Prime Minister's Office. Just as the Leader of the Opposition has an exempt staff, which has compiled two drawers full of files on myself, in addition to the files which the Member from Kingston has.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Are they using the powerful instruments of the state? No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Crombie: No, you are.

Mr. Trudeau: Let the Hon. Member substantiate his allegations. If it is the exempt staff of the Prime Minister, is this not a distinction between the state and the exempt staff of the Prime Minister? I had this argument with the Leader of the Opposition the other day who seems to believe—and I thought the Hon. Member was more informed—that there is no distinction between the public service, hired under the Public Service Act, which is different from the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister's Office is political by nature, just as the Leader of the Opposition's office is political by nature. I cannot believe the Hon. Member is ignorant. He must be a hypocrite to believe the two are the same. He knows the distinction. You all know the difference over there. I think you are all indulging in hypocrisy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!