

We recognize our obligations and I think we followed through, I can tell you not without considerable sadness, obviously because we owed the obligation of the highest possible standards to the Canadian people.

There is no relationship between the very unfortunate personal situation which involved the Minister of National Defence at the time and the awarding of a contract by the Minister of Supply and Services. I would hope that my hon. friend would be able to see that distinction because it appears to me to be quite obvious to all Members of the House.

Mr. Tobin: The Prime Minister says that there is no relationship, but the striking resemblance that I cannot help but note is that the Prime Minister just said seconds ago, "He did nothing wrong", referring to his Minister of Finance, but for the first time he has told the House of Commons that he solicited the resignation of the Minister of Defence. He did nothing wrong, but the Prime Minister solicited his resignation.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is telling us now that the Minister of Finance has done nothing wrong but he would not accept his resignation if it was offered. To that I say, behold the death of a well meaning Dr. Jekyll and the birth of Mr. Hyde.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: Shame!

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I have warned him that honour is like an island—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Is this Question Period or the Gong Show?

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps early in the Question Period the Chair could indicate that it would be appropriate once again if questioners and those responding were listened to.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I warn the Minister that honour is like an island, rugged and without a beach, and once we have left it we can never return. If he is to avoid the political perpetual purgatory that is the lot in life of the Solicitor General, will he now not do the honourable thing and resign forthwith his position as Minister of Finance?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): No.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

ATOMIC ENERGY CONTROL BOARD

WITHDRAWAL OF NOMINATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. On Monday a very distinguished Canadian scientist, Dr. Ursula Franklin, who has a reputation not only nationally but internationally for her competence, received a letter from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources confirming that she has been appointed to the Atomic Energy Control Board for two years.

She responded immediately with a letter seeking clarification of her responsibilities. I have obtained a copy of that letter. Within three hours of her conveying the contents of this letter to Ottawa, she received a phone call from the Minister's office, telling her that her appointment had been cancelled, that it did not exist, and that it was a non event. Would he explain this extraordinary sequence of events?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it was very extraordinary. The Hon. Member quite properly referred to the good reputation of the person involved. I do not think that there is any disagreement about that.

My information is that the person in question was indeed considered for appointment to the Atomic Energy Control Board. She expressed concerns about accepting this appointment because it would require her to take an oath of secrecy. In light of her concerns, the Government and the Minister were forced to reconsider the matter, and the appointment was never proceeded with.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Dr. Franklin has categorically denied the reason quoted in the Press, that she said that she would not accept it if she had to take the oath of secrecy. She is publicly quoted as denying that. I spoke to Dr. Franklin on the telephone this morning in that regard, and she repeated to me in private that she at no time said that was the case.

She wrote a very serious letter to the Minister after being told that she had the appointment for two years. She simply wanted clarification of what was required as part of her responsibility. Therefore, will the Prime Minister say to the House, in light of what he has just said, and this new information that I am giving to him, that the Government will reconsider its decision in this case and fulfil its obligation to a very distinguished Canadian scientist?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will faithfully report my hon. friend's concern to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources upon her return. I do not personally know this distinguished individual. I have been informed that Section 18(1) of the Atomic Energy Control Act makes the taking of such an oath mandatory. I was also informed that there was some reluctance on her part