

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Dingwall: When this question was initially raised by the hon. member on March 25, my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Peterson), replied that the government has always proceeded in accordance with the laws of this country and has done so in this particular litigation proceeding.

Later on during the question period on that same day a similar question was directed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) regarding the immunity of the Crown in this case. The Prime Minister replied by saying that since the matter is before the courts it would be improper to answer the question.

● (2220)

On March 29, when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) raised a question relating to the Uranium price-fixing trial, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde), stated that, as far as he knew, no instructions had been given to Uranium Canada. He continued to say that the company was being prosecuted, with other companies, and that presumably those lawyers defending Uranium Canada are using all the arguments that they can to defend their case.

On March 30 an opposition member asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to instruct Uranium Canada's counsel to withdraw the technical defence of Crown immunity, allowing Uranium Canada to partake in the same kind of trial its co-defendants are subject to. In response to this, the minister pointed out that this matter was before the courts, and that it is improper to bring before the House of Commons quotes from arguments used by counsel before the courts. He pointed out that it is a long established rule that Parliamentarians abstain from commenting on a particular case which is before the courts. The minister also took the opportunity at that time to reiterate what he had said the preceding day; that he had never given any instruction to Uranium Canada or its counsel and he had no intention of doing so in the future.

On April 1, the opposition was still posing questions on the Uranium Canada trial. At that time the minister repeated what he had said on numerous previous occasions, that he had not given Uranium Canada any instructions in relation to the court case and he would not interfere with the judicial process or in the operations of the board of directors of the Crown corporation.

I suggest respectfully, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member take note of these comments and not continue with his innuendo, his witch-hunting and his ridiculous assertions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POLITICAL PARTIES—FORMER AFFILIATION OF MANITOBA
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): I raised a question today, Mr. Speaker, as I did on March 29 in this House, reported in *Hansard* at page 15901, in which I asked the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister of State for Social Development (Mr. Chrétien), in his capacity as Attorney General of Canada, whether members of provincial cabinets had a security check done on them prior to their

entering cabinet. There was a somewhat lighter side to it. I believe I did not use my words quite correctly at that time, and I think I had the Attorney General of Canada just a little concerned that the accusation I was making was directed at him. In no way was that the case.

The question arises from the past membership in the Communist party of the Attorney General of Manitoba. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the time I asked the question, that it is a sensitive matter, that it is not a new revelation I am making public, but that it is a matter which has been in the public domain for many years. In fact, that past membership had been confirmed by the Attorney General of Manitoba himself.

Recent revelations from United States authorities show that the Manitoba Attorney General is still on a restricted list of persons who might wish to enter that country. That revelation was made as recently as March 23, 1982, in a front page story in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. In that story, a spokesman for the department of immigration and naturalization service of the United States department of justice, indicated to that paper that the Manitoba attorney general, if he should wish to enter the United States, would be required to have a waiver and is still listed as an undesirable visitor.

When a member of this House joins the federal cabinet, the leader of the party forming the government, the prime minister, has the option to ask for a security check of members entering that cabinet. I am not saying that that has been done by all prime ministers or that that has been done in all cases, but it has been done at the federal level. For those of us who entered the cabinet, for instance, in 1979, that was a criterion. I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that for a person who entered the cabinet at that time and took his responsibilities seriously, it did give a person a certain sense of confidence that that security check had been done. One felt that at least there was no impediment to fulfilling one's responsibilities to the people of Canada and to the House.

● (2225)

My question is straightforward. I am not on a witch-hunt. I am not trying to accuse someone of anything that has not been in the public domain. However, because attorneys general sit down with the Attorney General of Canada, or the Solicitor General of Canada, at different periods of time and sensitive information could in fact be passed from one level to the other, it is important that two questions be answered tonight by the parliamentary secretary. Was a security check done specifically on the Attorney General of Manitoba whom I mentioned earlier? Is it a general practice of provincial government in general that certain security checks are done before members are invited into their cabinets?

Mr. Jim Peterson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Mr. Speaker, following the election of the present government in Manitoba late last year, Mr. Roland Penner was appointed attorney general of that province. It is our understanding that