

*Oral Questions*

asked him was: Did the Prime Minister ever convey to Mr. Starnes, after he got the position which he got, that illicit operations of the kind which took place at L'Agence de Presse Libre would be absolutely unacceptable to the government? Did he say or indicate in manner or attitude that it is quite possible the government would accept such illicit operations for some noble purpose?

The question I would like the Prime Minister to answer in relation to that is: considering that he sent the telegram which I referred to in order to get information so that he could brief the Prime Minister, can the Prime Minister tell us if that information he got back, as a result of that cable sent on October 12, is on file; what was done with it; was it ever sent to the Prime Minister's office; did anyone in his office ever see it at that time?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the first part of the question was: what did we do with it when we heard about illicit acts? This has been repeated in the House and answered many, many times. As soon as we heard that there had been an illicit act in relation to the APLQ, we referred it to the attorney general of the province of Quebec. Later on when it appeared that this was not an isolated incident, we set up a royal commission. That is a very clear answer: as soon as we learned about it, we took action on it. The hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party is apparently trying to find out, in a very subtle way, whether we had heard about it before we acted. The answer is no. As soon as we heard about it, we acted.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## REASON FOR RESIGNATION OF MR. STARNES

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I now assume the Prime Minister's hearing is going with his age. The hon. member for Halifax was smiling because he knew that the Prime Minister was asked a rather explicit question twice in a row and refused to answer. We are talking about before the act occurred. Before the act occurred, did the Prime Minister indicate to Mr. John Starnes that illicit, under-cover, illegal operations to obtain information of any kind would not be tolerated? Did he make that very explicit in his mandate? I have a third question—

**Mr. Trudeau:** Let me answer the first one.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Since Mr. John Starnes retired prematurely at the age of 54, within two months after the illegal break-in to obtain information on the Parti Québécois, does the government have reasons for the resignation? Can they be produced? Did he resign on his own volition, or was his resignation requested?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I believe just a couple of years ago the House was making a great event out of the fact that we had several deputy ministers resigning when they were reaching the age of 55.

**An hon. Member:** Answer the question.

[Mr. Broadbent.]

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** You look phony today, Pierre.

**Mr. Trudeau:** The House knows the reason why that took place. If hon. members want to find out with greater certainty, they can pick up the phone and ask these various deputy ministers who resigned at that time.

**An hon. Member:** What are you hiding, Pierre?

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Is he 65 or 52?

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[Translation]

## AGRICULTURE

## REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT TAKE ACTION TO END IMPORTATION OF MILK PRODUCTS

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, the way things are going in the House these days, one would think that we are more concerned about saving the Parti Québécois than that party is concerned about saving itself. If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question on economics to the Minister of Agriculture. Considering that industrial milk producers must spend \$120 million a year to help the federal government export its milk powder surplus and keep in storage its butter surplus, considering that the Granby agricultural cooperative imports through one of its subsidiaries, namely, Québec Lait, some powdered buttermilk from New Zealand, could the minister inform the House whether or not he is aware of this and, if so, what he intends to do to remedy this serious problem?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the dairy farmers of Quebec, the industrial milk producers, are no different from the industrial milk producers of any other province. They all make contributions to the export fund to compete in the world market with the surplus product they have in Canada.

I am not sure exactly what the hon. member is talking about; but if he is talking about the skim milk powder from buttermilk, which comes in from New Zealand, that is a long standing arrangement with a fellow Commonwealth country. It is something I do not intend to break at this time. We have had discussions with the dairy farmers about this in the past. There has been a long standing arrangement with that country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary. The Minister of Agriculture said last year that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce had agreed to import \$50 million worth of cheese because those types of cheese were not made in Canada, and this mostly to protect the consumer, on which I agree. Since he just said that we have milk powder surpluses and since because of those surpluses the manufacturing milk producers now cannot produce any more, would it not