

Oral Questions

House. I hope that answers the question of my right hon. friend. If there is anything else, I would be happy to answer.

OERLIKON LAND TRANSACTION—REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that after the Prime Minister's statement in the House yesterday the law officers of the Crown and the Privy Council Office are scrambling to get their written documentation in order, but we in this House would very much like to see a copy of that legal opinion to justify the Prime Minister's position yesterday.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, doesn't the Prime Minister understand that selectively leaking information in the form of rumours may prejudice and harm the chances of anyone involved in legal proceedings? In the interests of the people of Canada and of all those concerned in the Oerlikon affair, wouldn't the best way to clear up this matter be to have a comprehensive public inquiry?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, all the experts we saw this morning seem to be in complete disagreement with what the Leader of the Opposition just said.

[English]

It seems in refusing to conduct a public inquiry while the police are investigating the affair the federal Government is probably taking the wisest and fairest legal course, according to academics familiar with public inquiries. "It seems to me to be a sensible decision that takes into account the rights of an accused person," said University of Toronto law professor Martin Friedland. That appears to be a widely held view in legal circles which is not inconsistent with the view expressed by the law officers of the Crown.

I regret the derogatory insinuations in regard to the public servants made by my right hon. friend. They conveyed straightforward legal advice which I conveyed to Members of the House. I know we saw the position of the Liberal Party set out yesterday by the Hon. Member for Sudbury. You do not want the facts, you want a circus. We are here to tell you that the RCMP will conduct a full inquiry and justice will be done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

OERLIKON AFFAIR—ROLE OF MR. JEAN BAZIN

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Prime Minister and concerns the "land flip" at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Could the Prime Minister explain to the House why, in his statement on January 18, his friend Jean Bazin failed to indicate that he had been doing work for Oerlikon since last February and had been on the management board since April,

and only said that he had been involved with Gestion Farillon since last August?

Why did Mr. Bazin make his statement the way he did?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as far as I know in this particular instance, all information requested from Mr. Bazin was made public.

EXTENT OF INFORMATION POSSESSED BY CABINET MINISTERS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. Considering that the law firm of Byers, Casgrain started investigating the "land flip" at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu last February, almost a year ago, and in view of the articles on the subject that have been appearing in the papers since last spring, does the Prime Minister still maintain that not a single Minister or Minister's office, including his own, had heard about the "land flip" at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu until January 13? Does he still maintain that today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and on several occasions I said that the RCMP had received a full mandate to investigate all the facts, and the Commissioner of the RCMP has said that the force will do so vigorously. And if, in the course of a police investigation of criminal charges, the RCMP finds claims that may be of interest to the Solicitor General, these are immediately reported to the Solicitor General.

I can therefore inform my hon. friend that all complaints and concerns and all the issues raised will probably be investigated by the RCMP.

APPARENT INFORMATION LEAKS—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. For five days the Prime Minister has refused to answer questions about the possibility of a conflict of interest on the part of one of his former Ministers, the Minister's wife and a number of Conservative friends, while during that same period, people in the Prime Minister's Office have been leaking incriminating information. Why the double standard?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says that for five days I have been refusing to answer any questions whatsoever about the Minister. That is false. I have given direct answers to all questions put to me.

As for the Hon. Member's specific question, I have said that as the Prime Minister I could not segregate information. I immediately made a value judgment on the information that was brought to my attention. I decided that the facts justified the Minister's dismissal and an immediate policy inquiry. I acted quickly and, I believe, firmly in this matter and I have answered my hon. friend's questions.