

"Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will be happy to raise the matter with the Prime Minister and to attempt to bring an answer back for the hon. member at a later date."

"POSSIBLE WIRETAPPING OF MEMBERS' TELEPHONES"

"Mr. Nielsen: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It seems that some hon. members find the matter humorous but I consider it to be quite serious. When the minister determines whether or not inquiries are necessary, will he specifically direct those inquiries to the possibility of long-distance calls to and from members' constituents being recorded through the long-distance facilities?"

"Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I take it that the hon. member is quite serious. If there is any possible suggestion that members' phones are being in any way interfered with, from whatever source, the matter would be quite serious indeed, and I would take whatever steps are open to us to ensure that Members of Parliament continue to have free and uninspected access to their telephones by which they are in contact with all parts of the population. I am sure that is what we all want and we will ensure that this takes place."

A careful reading of the above exchange, I am sure you will agree, does not justify your description of these matters as "allegations" raised by me, etc. The Acting Prime Minister of the day, Mr. MacEachen, more accurately described my questions as "the serious matter" being raised.

You have correctly set forth in your letter the terms of reference of the Committee. There have been allegations made, ostensibly to reassure members of the House, when the Prime Minister, on Monday, March 13, 1972 at page 745-6 of Hansard (English) made a statement on this matter. You will note that the Prime Minister in his statement refrained from describing the question asked by myself and the member for Mackenzie as "allegations".

In the Prime Minister's statement however, he makes at least four statements which may be quite properly described as allegations.

At page 745 he says "there is no such government policy" and, on the same page,—"nothing of the kind is done by the R.C.M.P. or on its behalf either in security work or in connection with criminal investigation", and, on the same page,—"there is no policy or direction in that regard", and, finally, on page 746,—"There is no recording of any kind of which I am aware, and certainly there is no policy of the kind the hon. member has suggested". These are statements that clearly fall within the committee's terms of reference and it seems to me that the committee's first duty would be to make full enquiry into these assertions and, more important, the whole matter of the "Possibility of Interception within Departments of Public Servants Personal Mail Directed To Members of Parliament" as the matter is referred to at page 710 of Hansard.

To accomplish this desirable objective it is my view, and my suggestion to you as Chairman of the Committee, that witnesses should be called before the committee to acquaint members with the policies and practices prevailing in each of the departments of the government. The committee should hear a witness or witnesses from the R.C.M.P. and from the recently established security organization in the department of the Solicitor General. The Committee should also hear evidence from witnesses knowledgeable in these fields who are members of the armed forces. Finally, the committee should hear the evidence of witnesses not in the employ of the government but who are knowledgeable in the matters referred to.

After the foregoing course of action has been taken by the Committee, then I would suggest that all Members of the House be invited to present further suggestions as to the manner in which the Committee might best complete its difficult and serious task of a full and complete enquiry and report to the House.

I personally will have further suggestions to make when the Committee has reached that stage of its proceedings.

Sincerely,

Erik Nielsen
EN:dk

Ottawa,
April 21, 1972.

Mr. Erik Nielsen, M.P.,
Room 322, West Block,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Nielsen:

Mr. Ovide Lafamme, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, has asked me to invite you to appear before the Committee to substantiate the allegations concerning wiretapping and opening of mail of Members of this House and to furnish to Members of the said Committee all information and proof in support of the said allegations.

This meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 1972 at 11:00 a.m. in Room 269 West Block.

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure is prepared to recommend to the Committee that the meeting be held *In Camera* for the protection of your source or sources, should you request it.

If the above mentioned date or time is not suitable, would you please indicate the nearest possible date on which you would be able to appear.

An answer by Monday, April 24, 1972 would be appreciated in this regard.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Marleau
Clerk of the Standing Committee
on Privileges and Elections

RDM/gb