

rent question to the Prime Minister involving the communications media of Canada, and I was hoping that the Prime Minister had referred that question to the Secretary of State so he could reply to both at once.

**Mr. Speaker:** I still abide by the ruling I made a moment ago. I do not wish to be unfair to the hon. member, but I am suggesting it complicates the question period when two or three different questions are asked at the same time.

[Translation]

**Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question is that at the beginning of the Cross-Laporte matter, the directors of the news service of the French network were issuing oral instructions to senior editors, producers and reporters asking them to show continuous and increased vigilance over news on that matter, to check and double check any information on the subject before releasing it, in order to avoid creating a feeling of panic, and to always show restraint.

After the emergency measures were adopted, the authorities gave the people in charge of radio and television news programs a copy of the regulations passed by the federal government and they were in constant touch with the legal advisers of the Corporation about the interpretation of the regulations.

The English network has instructed its agents to observe moderation and caution when releasing information related to the crisis, particularly when dealing with conjectures. It has also issued directions as to the legal aspects of reporting under the War Measures Act. Such instructions are usual in cases of serious crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I would be transgressing the rule you have just laid down—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It might be in order to determine whether the hon. member wants to ask a supplementary question related to the Minister's reply.

[English]

**Mr. Nowlan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do. Would the Secretary of State be kind enough to obtain these directives and have them tabled, if possible? Would he also tell us whether he has been informed by the CBC, either the English-speaking or the French-speaking networks, that pursuant to this directive certain news reports were, in fact, changed before they were broadcast?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pelletier:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has missed an important word in my reply. I did say "oral instructions", which means obviously that I cannot produce any document.

As far as the second question is concerned, it was not contained in the first one. I shall therefore inquire from the Corporation and prepare a reply for the hon. member.

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the question asked yesterday when I was not

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here in connection with the tapes requested by the CRTC. The hon. member is well aware that, according to Section 4(5) of the CRTC Regulations issued under the Broadcasting Act, radio and TV program tapes or transcripts are to be kept by the stations for 30 days. It happens quite often that the CRTC, as a result of a complaint or on its own initiative, asks a station for tapes or transcripts of certain programs.

In the case referred to by the hon. member for Annapolis-Valley, I am told that the CRTC sent this request to broadcasting stations because the 30-day period is about to expire and the tapes concerned may be destroyed.

The CRTC thought it had the responsibility of recuperating and preserving those tapes for reference, study and research purposes. Indeed it is a well known fact that newspapers covering the lifetime of many generations are available in libraries and archives but such is not automatically the case with electronic news media.

[English]

**Mr. Nowlan:** I thank the Secretary of State for his answer regarding the CRTC. Is the House to understand that this request by telegram, which went out to some 20 stations across Canada without explanation, was sent on the initiative of the CRTC? Or was it done on the initiative of the government, or of the RCMP?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pelletier:** The CRTC took this initiative, Mr. Speaker, and I should like to point out to the hon. member that if any police service had wanted any tapes, they could have asked for them without going to the CRTC.

[English]

**Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond):** I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State relating to the remarks made by the Solicitor General a few moments ago about the difficulty in getting a tape of last night's news broadcast. Inasmuch as CRTC regulations require such tapes to be held, why should the Solicitor General experience difficulty in getting this tape from Montreal today?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pelletier:** I believe the answer to this question is quite simple, Mr. Speaker. When requesting information of this type, you don't ask for a piece of tape, but for a transcript. The transcript has to be made from the tape and that requires a certain amount of time; therefore, a delay is inevitable.

[English]

**Mr. MacInnis:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order arises from the fact that the minister is not well informed about CRTC regulations or about what he, as the minister, can do. The fact remains that these tapes can be made directly available from the station which makes the broadcast. For that matter, I have a tape made by the President of the Privy Council—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a debate between the hon. member and the minister.