

Mr. Trudeau: It is difficult to see how it was authorized if no authorization was sought.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Greenwood.

Mr. Lawrence: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Lawrence: I merely wanted to ask him why it was not sought.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—
INQUIRY WHETHER PRIME MINISTER'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
VISITED JUDGE ON OWN INITIATIVE

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to address a question directly to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I think in a statement he has made it absolutely clear that at the time of the trial of the Trinidadian students he did, in fact, visit Mr. Justice Mackay for some purpose or other. His account varies a good deal from Mr. Justice Mackay's account of what happened, and I also understand the Prime Minister to have said that he did not go on his instructions, although he was working in his office.

I ask the minister to tell us now if he went entirely on his own initiative, or who instructed him to go to see the justice at that particular time?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think previous practice has shown us that for the Minister of National Health and Welfare to attempt to answer that question at this time would be infringing a clearcut rule of this House that he was not at that time acting in his current capacity as a minister of the Crown at all.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question can be quite properly directed to the Prime Minister, under whose responsibility that office was then and is now.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, the question I put was a question of fact directly within the knowledge of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and I suggest that this House has the right to hear from him on whose instructions he made the visit which he made. With all due respect, I fail to see why that question is in any way improper.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister may seek to make an answer to that question, or as has been the practice in the past, to suggest that he might refer it to the current or former minister. That is the privilege of the Prime Minister, but the question clearly cannot be put directly to the minister in his former capacity.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot add much to what I said earlier, but it is true, as the present minister says, that he did seek Mr. Justice Mackay to talk to him at that time about a trial of students of Sir George Williams University in Montreal—

An hon. Member: Who authorized it?

Mr. Trudeau:—and that he did it at the request of a foreign government which wanted to know something about the trial and how it was proceeding. Mr. Lalonde informed me that the only matter which arose between him and the judge was as to the date at which the judgment would be rendered and that no other matters, such as those alleged in Mr. Justice Mackay's letter, were raised between them. It was merely a question of knowing at what approximate date the trial would end.

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—
REQUEST MINISTER OF CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS
RETURN FROM HOLIDAY

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that some of these extraordinary allegations involve the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), may I ask the Prime Minister if he, his Minister of Justice or any member of his cabinet or staff have been in touch with the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who I understand is on vacation in Mexico? Have the views of the minister been determined, and in view of these extraordinary allegations is it the intention of the Prime Minister to order the immediate return of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Public Works indicated a moment ago, the contempt of court case in which the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is involved is now being appealed. There are no allegations of which I know made by Mr. Justice Mackay beyond the fact that there have been contempt of court proceedings. I do not know if the minister has been apprised of the contents of this morning's newspaper. I know of no need to apprise him of that. There are no new facts alleged there. I am sure somebody at some point will tell him what is going on and what has been written in the newspaper, and he probably will be informed. Perhaps the new Leader of the Opposition who is also taking a vacation in Mexico, I understand, might tell the minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DECISION ON PAYMENT OF LEGAL FEES OF MR. HOLDEN

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will get back sooner or later. May I ask the Minister of Justice if he has been in touch with his colleague on this matter?

May I also ask him at the same time if a decision has been reached with respect to the legal fees of the special prosecutor, Mr. Holden, or does the minister hold to the