

## Oral Questions

stituency faced with a 16 per cent unemployment rate, and I do not believe I have to apologize to anybody for trying to fulfill my responsibilities as a member of this House for Saint-Maurice.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The minister seeks, I take it, to table a letter to which he has made reference. The Standing Orders permit a minister of the Crown, of course, to table any document to which he has referred in the course of debate or discussion in the House which relates to his particular administrative responsibility. This probably would be an exception. I presume, however, that the House might want to give its consent to the tabling of the document. However, it ought to be sought. Does the minister have the consent of the House to table the letter in question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to say that I also asked my legal advisers to consider the possibility of instituting proceedings against the newspaper that published allegations based on hearsay rather than on specific charges.

[English]

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Will the right hon. gentleman not take into account the fact that the issues have already been clearly drawn in this matter and either the allegations made by Mr. Justice Mackay are wrong, in which event there is some doubt about his competence to continue to hold his position, or they are right, in which case there is some doubt as to the propriety of the three ministers to remain where they are. Will he take that into calculation and do something to remedy this intolerable situation, because after all the public are more important than the right hon. gentleman and myself. They are entitled to have a full, unbiased and quite open examination of the allegations.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right; there is this choice to be made. If the decision comes on one side, indeed, it will not be a good thing for the ministers. If it comes on the other side, it will not enhance the reputation of the administration of justice, and that is why I am not certain it is in the public interest at this stage to have a full inquiry.

● (1450)

Some hon. Members: Why?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Because I am trying to indicate to the House that in our view the proper course would have been for Mr. Justice Mackay to speak to the chief justice who would have communicated with the deputy minister of justice, and he would have looked into these facts in the proper way. Already there is a demand for withdrawal by one of the ministers. The House knows that I was mentioned in one of those letters, and since there has been no question to me about my involvement, I suppose the judgment of the House is that Justice Mackay did not have any

[Mr. Chrétien.]

great cause to put me in his letter, even though it did warrant a picture of me on the first page of the *Globe*.

I think it should be obvious to hon. members that there may be more which should be looked into by the chief justice before the government makes a decision on this, and I know the House and the country will not forget about this incident. It is just a matter of following the proper procedure, which we are convinced we are doing.

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—  
POSSIBILITY ADVICE OF MINISTER OF JUSTICE SOUGHT  
BEFORE PRIME MINISTER'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY VISITED  
JUDGE

**Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** Mr. Speaker, surely now that we have had one minister's piece of correspondence tabled, we should have them all tabled.

Some hon. Members: Question.

**Mr. Lawrence:** However, bearing in mind that while the Prime Minister is right that the judiciary has a role to protect our fundamental freedoms, surely this parliament has a primary role over that, not only to protect our fundamental freedom, but also to protect the freedom of the judiciary itself, which is something it may not be able to do.

Getting back to the 1969 incident, Mr. Justice Mackay stated further in reference to the alleged intervention in the trial by the present hon. member for Outremont (Mr. Lalonde)—this is in relation to the Trinidadian students—that the then minister of justice, John Turner, and I quote: "was apprised of the Lalonde incident" and that "he too, being a staunch defender of judicial independence, was deeply shocked."

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Was that before his intercession on behalf of Sky Shops?

**Mr. Lawrence:** Can the Prime Minister inform the House if the opinion of the then justice minister was ever sought by any member of the Prime Minister's office before Mr. Lalonde contacted Mr. Justice Mackay?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lalonde, the present Minister of National Health and Welfare, informed me that he did not discuss the matter with the then minister of justice. I understand that Mr. Turner has also denied that he had been consulted about it, and I fail to see why the hon. member would repeat in the House an allegation relating to a former minister who has denied that it ever happened.

**Mr. Lawrence:** The answer is simple: because we don't know the facts, and we are not getting them today either.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lawrence:** However, if that is the case, as the Prime Minister has just indicated—and I am not denying it—can the Prime Minister then explain to the House why the contacting of a superior court judge on a matter such as this by an aide within his own office was authorized without first seeking the authorization of the then minister of justice?