

this week about the situation. "I want to find out what it's all about," he said.

That was a long time ago. There is no indication the government has yet found out what it is all about. The foregoing is to illustrate that neither the Solicitor General nor the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand), nor, apparently, anyone else in government, had enough perspicacity or initiative to look into these matters as they developed to provide sound advice, to take proper action and exhibit responsible leadership.

We must remember that the federal appointees to the Hamilton Harbour Commission constituted a majority of two out of three, which is not a bad majority, and anything that has been done in the Hamilton Harbour affair, I suggest, would have been very difficult to achieve without the agreement of at least one of the federally appointed commissioners. Here one must ask, where was the guiding hand and the advice from the Minister of Justice?

There has been a strange lack of frankness from the government ministers which goes far beyond the need for the normal reticence which could be justified by having the mantle of sub judice thrown over some of the matters at issue.

I believe that there are many things yet to be explained and I hope that the Minister of Justice will very soon tell us exactly what he and his predecessors have been doing in discharging their responsibilities, whether there is any truth in reports that the preliminary hearings with regard to dredging will not begin until next fall at the earliest, and whether the Minister of Justice has any input into this state of affairs.

Perhaps the Prime Minister would have been as well advised when he was Minister of Justice, in addition to worrying about the state having no place in the bedrooms of the nation, to have concerned himself with the relationship of the government in boardrooms of certain corporations.

I presume that as matters unfold we will also learn why the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) made such a clear and unequivocal answer to a question on February 25 when he said no to a question asked by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) as to whether he had any indication or believed that he would be called as a witness in respect to the Hamilton Harbour affair. We now find that he will be a witness and has in fact testified before the Grand Jury.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Marceau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I would rather answer the question put by the hon. member on March 19. As for his comments this evening, I presume the minister will answer in due course.

[English]

As hon. members will appreciate, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) and his departmental legal officers are consulted in any particular matter which may involve legal issues at various stages during the examination or investi-

### Adjournment Debate

gation of the matter and by various parts of the government as well. Some of the consultations are of a very informal and tentative nature; others involve requests for formal advice or action by the Attorney General. Consequently, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint with precision an exact time at which the Minister of Justice as Attorney General was first consulted on or asked for advice in relation to a particular matter.

● (2200)

In respect of the criminal charges arising out of the Hamilton Harbour investigation, hon. members will appreciate that those laid under the Criminal Code were at the initiative of the Attorney General of Ontario pursuant to section 2 of the Code. The income tax charges which were laid against several of the parties connected with this matter on March 11, 1975, were of course initiated by the federal authorities, and officers of the Department of Justice were consulted by other agencies of the federal government during several months preceding the date on which charges were preferred.

On the question of withholding payments which may be due to the several contractors who have been charged in connection with the dredging contracts, advice was again sought from the Department of Justice by other parts of the federal government during the past several months on the legal position to be taken in this regard. As hon. members will be aware, several of the dredging companies commenced an action in the Federal Court against the Crown, challenging the right of the Crown to withhold moneys claimed as owing to them under contracts with the Crown.

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ASSISTING ADULT REFUGEES FROM VIET NAM

**Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, all Canadians are deeply concerned about the collapse of Viet Nam and are taking considerable comfort in operation baby-lift which has so far brought 1,400 orphans to the western world, 61 of whom have been brought to Canada. However, tonight I wish to make a strong plea for taking a sober second look at the implications of operation baby-lift as a way of helping the beleaguered people of South Viet Nam. I want to urge that we calm down our emotional reaction and that the Canadian government appoint a co-ordinator with respect to all aspects of Canadian aid to Viet Nam, both north and south.

I begin by reflecting that the urge to save these children springs from a deep human desire to rescue those who are least capable of defending themselves against the unfolding horror. The individuals who have given their energy, spirit and in some cases their lives to the cause of these suffering children are worthy of our deepest respect—I include all those Canadians who wish to offer their assistance by opening their homes to orphans. I also wish to take note of what has been done by both the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Andras), and commend them for the part they have placed in these humanitarian efforts.