

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I think I made it clear, and the Leader of the Opposition must be aware, that this particular incident is currently under review by the Chief Justice of Quebec. The Prime Minister has suggested—I am in full concurrence and I think the House will be—that the Chief Justice should be allowed time to conduct his inquiries and to reach a judgment, rather than have a number of other individuals concurrently exploring the matter.

● (1410)

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, as the minister well knows, the inquiry by the Chief Justice of Quebec is into a matter related to judges. What this parliament and the people of Canada are interested in has to do with the conduct of ministers of the Crown.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** Let me repeat the question to the minister. There have now been public allegations as to the content of his conversation which he admitted having with a member of the Bench of Quebec. Will the minister now stop dodging and tell the House whether he tried to sound out the presiding judge as to the question of the response of the court to an apology by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. With all due respect, as the Leader of the Opposition stated, that is a repetition of the question. The minister made an answer, such as that answer may be, but that is the answer that has been given. I cannot really, in view of the rules, permit a repeat of the question.

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—  
KNOWLEDGE OF PRIME MINISTER OF CONTENT OF  
CONVERSATION BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS WITH JUDGE  
HUGESSEN

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** The Prime Minister said yesterday in answer to a question that I posed, and I quote:

I have heard from the three ministers who were mentioned in Justice Mackay's letter . . .

I listened to their version and feel that their explanations indicated clearly that they were not attempting to influence in any way the judgment of the courts.

That is the position of the Prime Minister. Did the Prime Minister ask the Minister of Public Works what the minister said to the judge, particularly with regard to the statement to effect a solution made by the Minister of Public Works and the statement relevant to the full knowledge of the facts being possessed by the judge? If so, did the Minister of Public Works raise with the judge the matter of a response to an apology and the political impact of the verdict by the courts? Will the Prime Minister give that information to the House of Commons?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the House that I had raised this matter with the ministers and that they had given me an answer which I found satisfactory. However, I conceded from the very first day that this important matter was discussed

[Mr. Clark]

that the view of the courts may be different. I think that the Minister of Public Works in his answer just now stated in the most perfect way possible the attitude of the government, that attitude being that we in this House should not be telling the chief justice what his court should feel and not feel and we should leave that for him to decide.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—VIEW  
OF PRIME MINISTER ON WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS  
INTERFERENCE

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Whatever the report of the Chief Justice of Quebec, is the Prime Minister prepared to tell this House whether there was intervention by ministers of his Crown—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** —with the courts of Quebec and what was the nature of that intervention? Is he prepared to tell this House that, instead of shunting it off to a judge? Does he deny this House the right to that kind of information?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Leader of the Opposition is back on track. Yesterday he was worried about what ministers were telling each other. Now, he is back to the really important question of what ministers may have been saying to judges and whether this did or did not constitute an attempt to influence the course of justice. I have reached the conclusion unilaterally, a one-sided point of view if you wish, that there was no such attempt. I am, of course, prepared to hear the courts argue the contrary and demonstrate the contrary. If the courts feel aggrieved and feel there has been an attempt to influence the course of justice, that indeed will be a very serious matter. At that point we will have to establish whether the court's or ministers' version is correct. Of course, at that point I cannot pretend that I will be the judge of a matter in which I was involved. I will then discuss with the opposition ways in which we can seek out the truth in this matter.

ALLEGATIONS OF INTERFERENCE BY JUDGE MACKAY—  
INQUIRY WHETHER MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS CALLED  
JUDGE HUGESSEN ON OWN INITIATIVE

**Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief supplementary for the Minister of Public Works which might be described perhaps as a point of clarification. Would the hon. gentleman state unequivocally whether the telephone call he made to Chief Justice Hugessen was done solely on the minister's own initiative or whether it came following conversations and consultations with any of his colleagues?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, this is only slightly less direct than the previous questions.