

the students' mothers and fathers. Who is telling the truth to the people of Canada?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member would not be quite so selective in his quotes, he would read into the story that the people at the meeting informed me the number I could use—and they said “use”—was 10,000. I would like to inform the Hon. Member that he can go around second-guessing everybody and trying to run down this initiative, but this weekend in my constituency office I saw student group after student group who came in with proposals. They asked me how soon the proposals could be funded and how soon the jobs could get under way. I saw that in my riding; 211 Conservative Members saw it in their constituencies—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Deputy Prime Minister concerning the answers given by the Solicitor General a few minutes ago.

Does he not feel that the Solicitor General's refusal to say clearly that he did not consult his Deputy Minister or the RCMP Commissioner before he met Mr. Hatfield is an error of judgment especially in the light of the decision delivered by the judge of the Superior Court of New Brunswick who said that the federal case began to deteriorate following interference by federal authorities?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding from the responses of the Solicitor General, and indeed from reports in the media, that the Solicitor General had conversations and briefings with the RCMP—I believe as far back as two days after the substance was found in the suitcase. But, here again, we are getting into the evidence of the trial and we are re-trying the matter here in the House of Commons. I repeat, if the Opposition has any point to make at all, it surely must be focused on the allegation of some impropriety on the part of the Solicitor General at that meeting.

● (1440)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: They say the meeting was improper; not at all. The meeting in itself does not constitute any impropriety.

Mr. Deans: Of course it does.

Oral Questions

Mr. Nielsen: If there is an allegation of impropriety, which there must be to give any substance to the thrust which the Opposition are taking today, then it should be stated clearly, and forthrightly, and honestly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DORION INQUIRY REPORT

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister about something he knows quite well. I would like to refer him to the inquiry of Mr. Justice Dorion. The judgment of the then Minister of Justice, Mr. Favreau, was questioned, not because he had made the wrong decision but because he had not consulted with his officials and had put himself in a difficult position. I would like to read to the Deputy Prime Minister what Mr. Justice Dorion said:

It should not be forgotten that a Minister, as a Judge, all his competence notwithstanding—

Mr. Speaker: I know this is a very, very important matter, but I would ask the Hon. Member to come to his supplementary question as quickly as he possibly can.

Mr. Chrétien:

—is always a human being and his view of a case may be unconsciously distorted by relations existing between himself and the person or persons concerned.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister not think at this time that when the Solicitor General received his friend, the Premier of New Brunswick, that he was doing exactly what Mr. Justice Dorion said in his judgment in 1965?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): No, Mr. Speaker, and I have cause to recall those proceedings very clearly. I can tell the Hon. Member that, as a Member of Parliament in those days, I caused the then Minister of Justice to be aware of the facts two, if not three days, before they were raised in the House of Commons.

Mr. Chrétien: He did the honourable thing, Favreau—he resigned.

Mr. Nielsen: I can tell the Hon. Member as well that, with respect to what Hon. Members opposite are trying to do today, when I rose in my place on that side of the House and attempted to do what those Hon. Members are doing today—

Mr. Chrétien: You asked for his resignation.

Mr. Nielsen:—I specified the Section of the Criminal Code and made the direct accusation that there was a breach of that Section of the Criminal Code. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I believe, was in the House on that occasion or just after.

Mr. Chrétien: And Favreau resigned. He was honourable.