

Oral Questions

RCMP to act illegally under the circumstances that have already been revealed, and will he also accept to throw light on the responsibility of the RCMP agents provocateurs in the infamous October 1970 crisis?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I should like to reflect at greater length on the question of the hon. member. Naturally, I am not familiar enough with the matter to give him a complete answer, but, generally speaking, I believe that most of the topics he has brought to our attention are now being examined by the McDonald Commission. I am totally confident that the latter will be able to assume its full responsibilities under its terms of reference.

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[English]

THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

SIGNATURE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ON QUEBEC BILL 101

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. In connection with the signature which was applied a couple of days ago to Bill 101 by the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, after a delay of approximately five months, at which time he affixed his signature to the French version of Bill 101, was the Government of Canada consulted by the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec as to the course that should be followed? Was there any discussion between the government of Canada and the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec in connection with this matter?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I made a quick check on that point this morning. To my knowledge the answer is no, there has been no such consultation or discussion between the government and the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec. That is the result of a quick check. If further investigation reveals that I am incorrect, I will tell the House.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, as the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec constitutionally occupies a dual position as a representative of the Crown and is responsible to the Government of Canada which appointed him, does the Acting Prime Minister not think the Government of Canada, under the law which provides for bilingualism in every part of Canada, should have made it clear to the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec that the course he was following was one which was satisfying Mr. Lévesque but was a denial of the entire constitutional basis of this country?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I would not undertake to accept that view. The Lieutenant Governor of Quebec is an experienced person with long service in that particular post. I am sure he acted with full knowledge of the consequences of his actions and his constitutional position. To my knowledge, we have not had any contact or discussion with him as to how he ought to proceed.

[Mr. Matte.]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am always impressed by the hon. minister when he answers a question and when he speaks in the House. I ask him this simple question: Does he not think the Government of Canada owed a duty to the whole of Canada to take a view different from that expressed by Premier Lévesque and apparently accepted by Mr. Lapointe in correspondence, was what took place proper and appropriate? Surely the Government of Canada should have followed the course other governments had followed in the past when lieutenant governors act contrary to what is expected in a national sense, namely, the government steps in. Is this another example of the Government of Canada having a sham fight with Premier Lévesque?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker; the fight is quite real.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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BILINGUALISM

ALLEGED LACK OF PUBLIC POLICY FOR PROGRAM

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. It concerns the recent resignation of the minister's bilingualism co-ordinator in Ontario, Mr. Richard Fitzgerald, who charged at the time of his quitting that the lack of public policy in dealing with ethnic groups is resulting in a waste of funds and an unfair allocation of money: in fact, he suggested that this money is being used to re-elect Liberals, to the detriment of the minority it is supposed to serve.

When the minister's undersecretary appeared before the standing committee last November 30, in response to a question posed by me he said:

The way I have operated is to seek my minister's approval for priorities and then decide to discriminate in favour of the issue.

Can the minister give an unambiguous assurance that he or his office at no time during the drafting or implementation of funding programs under his department for minority groups or citizen participation gave an implied or direct indication to his officials that the impact of such funding upon the Liberal party's fortunes should be a consideration in its allocation?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I can give the hon. member that assurance. I met with the public servant in question after he tendered his resignation to explore with him the reasons for it, and indeed we discussed policy matters. But at no time in our conversation did he raise the kind of matter which was referred to in the press and to which the hon. member has now referred.

When I read those press reports, obviously I was disturbed by their import. I instructed my officials to get in touch with him to find out if there was specific evidence to support such allegations, if indeed he made such allegations. I know my