

*Oral Questions*

come a country where journalists are tossed into jail for doing their work?

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that this matter is now before the courts and should be kept there.

CONSULTATION BY RCMP PRIOR TO CHARGES  
QUESTIONED

**Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Canadians are having trouble with the idea of prosecuting a journalist who was simply doing his job. Will the Solicitor General, who has responsibility for the RCMP, tell the House if he had been consulted by the RCMP prior to charges being laid?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am going to allow that question, but I am going to remind Members and the public, as I commented the other day, that there is a distinction between the administration of justice at the federal level and the administration of justice at the provincial level. I want that kept clearly in mind when questions and replies are given in this matter.

I will hear the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, any discussion of the actual charges or their propriety, either in this House or outside, is contrary to our traditions and since the case is before the courts I am not prepared to comment.

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHARGES QUESTIONED

**Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister telling us that the Government did not encourage the RCMP to lay charges, after the Minister of Justice told the House on April 27 that this reporter acted in a responsible manner?

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat my answer of yesterday. The RCMP were called in immediately to investigate the case. The RCMP investigated it. They discussed their findings with the officials of the Province of Ontario.

**Mr. Tobin:** And?

**Mr. Lewis:** They came back and the RCMP laid the charge.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** And?

**THE BUDGET**

QUERY AS TO WHETHER SENIOR DEPUTY INITIATED  
TELEPHONE CALLS TO TORONTO OFFICIALS

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Justice. I noticed in Question Period a few minutes ago he was referring to a CP transcript and a news story about a senior deputy, Mr. Rutherford. We have now had several hours, of course, since that newspaper was circulated. Has the Minister of Justice since this morning had a chance to speak directly with his senior deputy? Did he ask him directly whether or not he initiated the call to officials in Toronto? Did he ask him whether or not he was calling on behalf of the Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** If I give an answer in this House I want to be speaking from fact and that is why when the Leader of the New Democratic Party asked me that question, I undertook to find out who initiated that call. I don't have that in front of me. I have in front of me a transcript of the Canadian Press interview—

**Mr. Tobin:** What was the advice given?

**Mr. Lewis:** —in which it was very clear from the comments of the provincial official that it was normal consultations which took place between the parties.

**Mr. Barrett:** Don't you know what happened today? What have you been doing all morning? It is unbelievable.

**An Hon. Member:** It is all part of a cover-up.

EXPLANATION SOUGHT AS TO CONFIRMATION OF  
TELEPHONE CALLS

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** The Minister of Justice now has had several hours to check out the facts with his senior Deputy Minister. I want to know now why the Minister of Justice did not speak with Mr. Rutherford. He has had several hours to do so. He knows this issue is important in the House today. He knows it is an important issue across the country. Why has he not picked up the phone and called the Deputy Minister into his office and said to him, did you call the officials in Toronto and who were you calling on behalf of? Why has he not done that?