

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Clark:** It would be a great deal easier if the government would simply come clean and give all the information.

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

**Mr. Clark:** Let me direct a supplementary to the Prime Minister. When asked yesterday if he would deny categorically that the ganging up had been discussed formally or informally by members of cabinet, the Minister of Public Works said: "I am utterly appalled that the distinguished House leader of the Conservative Party should expect to get information from a member of cabinet on details of proceedings in cabinet." The Minister of Public Works referred specifically to details of proceedings in cabinet. Will the Prime Minister tell the House, now, whether the question or the idea of any kind of ganging-up was, in fact, discussed in cabinet, and, if so, when?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I always hesitate about indicating what went on in cabinet. I will attempt to answer this question but I do not want it to be seen as a precedent. In the overwhelming majority of cases I prefer not to discuss what went on in cabinet. I do from time to time comment to the press on what items were on the agenda and what were not. I would think it remiss of me to go beyond that. I can give an answer here, and even if it were an answer to the contrary I would not mind giving that either. The answer is that the issue was not discussed in cabinet, but had it been I would not see anything so scandalous about that.

The hon. member heard yesterday a motion in this House from the Cr ditiste party. They know something about the problems of Quebec. They know that this kind of issue is sometimes raised. If it is raised, either by way of rumour, as the minister has said, or by way of reality, it is the duty of the government, which is the government of all Canadians, to know about these rumours and discuss them if appropriate. In this particular case it just so happens it was not discussed, but I would not be ashamed if it had.

CONTENT OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. DRURY AND  
JUDGE HUGESSEN

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Public Works. Mr. Justice Hugessen's letter indicates that they discussed a great deal more than the sociology of baseless rumours. My question is to seek information. Now that the Desch nes report is out, would the minister tell the House, as alleged earlier last week, whether in fact he told the judge that the accused was a very important person, presumably to the government, and that the proceeding was politically very sensitive and potentially explosive?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I think that statement, if I recognize it, is attributed to me, allegedly by a certain Mr. Holden. It is quite without foundation.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Well, I did not get many facts out of that.

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

[Mr. Drury.]

PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATIONS WITH MR. DRURY AND MR.  
OUELLET—REASON FOR ACCEPTING MR. OUELLET'S  
RESIGNATION

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I would now like to put this question to the Prime Minister. On March 9, 1976, which was before the Desch nes report came out, the Prime Minister said: "I listened to their version"—meaning the version of the two ministers—"and feel that their explanations indicated clearly that they were not attempting to influence in any way the judgment of the courts". Then on March 17 the Prime Minister said: "That is right, I got the answer from the minister on Monday". There were two periods when the Prime Minister examined the ministers or cross-examined them or discussed with them. Did the Prime Minister get a different version from one or both ministers—that is, the Minister of Public Works and the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs—during the two periods of discussions and, if not, why did he accept the resignation of the former minister of consumer affairs following that Monday?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I got different versions because I asked different questions. If the hon. member refers to the text that he has just read, in the first instance I was concerned with illegalities and that was the burden of my questions. Once we had asked Justice Desch nes to look into the matter, then I felt that in all propriety I should wait for him to give his version of the facts. Having heard his version of the facts and that there was no illegality in everyone's judgment but an impropriety, I then went back to the ministers and asked them further questions relative to this impropriety.

**Mr. Woolliams:** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Now, we are getting somewhere. We find that there were two versions. I take it from the Prime Minister's answer that what was said in the second version led to the resignation of the former minister of consumer and corporate affairs?

**Mr. Trudeau:** The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

ALLEGATION OF INTERFERENCE WITH JUDICIARY—METHOD  
BY WHICH ALLEGATION INVESTIGATED

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister suggested to the House that he would have the Minister of Justice write to the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec to ascertain whether or not any of the judges in question felt that they had been aggrieved, the reply of the Chief Justice makes it perfectly clear that he was dealing only with the matter of the judges, as the Prime Minister has suggested. Chief Justice Desch nes said in his letter:

—it is obviously not one of my functions to set myself up as a semi-official investigator on behalf of the House of Commons.

● (1120)

Further on in his report he said:

I therefore do not want to set myself up here as a judge of your colleague nor of mine.