

EMPLOYMENT

CUTBACKS IN MANPOWER TRAINING PROGRAMS—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, due to the cutbacks announced in the Canada Manpower Training Program, Connestoga College, centred in Kitchener-Waterloo, and other community colleges across Ontario, will have to discontinue programs abruptly in midstream, dashing the hopes of trainees for employment. Many of the affected courses have a 100 per cent employment record with great support from local industry. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Cambridge (Mr. Speyer):

That this House call upon the Minister of Employment and Immigration to explain to Parliament why these programs have been cancelled at a time of high unemployment and shortage of manpower with basic skills.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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GRAIN

COMPENSATION TO FARMERS FOR EMBARGO ON SHIPMENTS TO
RUSSIA—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Madam Speaker, I too rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of the fact that uncertainty still surrounds the decision on compensation to prairie grain producers for losses arising from the Russian grain embargo, and in view of the fact that there has been no relief from the high interest rates and input costs facing the grain producers, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski):

That cabinet make a decision on the amount of compensation immediately and arrange for the mailing of cheques within ten days in order that the producers will have some cash on hand to meet spring seeding costs.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

SUPPORT FOR FISHERMEN'S NEGOTIATING RIGHTS—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, whereas the fishermen in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia are presently denied even basic collective bargaining rights by the regressive legislation in those areas, and whereas

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the fishermen in New Brunswick are presently peacefully demonstrating in favour of that provincial government changing its legislation, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker):

That this House express its solidarity with the fishermen in the maritime provinces and supports their right to negotiate a fair price for their catch.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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● (1115)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PROCEDURE RELATING TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Madam Speaker, I wish to move a motion which I think might very well receive the unanimous consent of the House because it expresses sentiments which have already been expressed by spokesmen for all parties.

Whereas last night and on previous occasions it has been suggested by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette), and agreed to by spokesmen from the opposition parties, that improvements might be made to the rules of the House dealing with written questions, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor):

That the Standing Orders and practices of the House of Commons relating to written questions be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization for study and that the said committee be instructed to report back to the House with recommendations.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPREME COURT HEARING—REQUEST
FOR WITHDRAWAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL RESOLUTION FROM
CONSIDERATION BY PARLIAMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, through the Chair I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that the Supreme Court of Canada has now set April 28 as the date on

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which it will begin to consider whether the government's constitutional resolution is within the competence of Parliament to enact alone. Rather than having Parliament risk acting illegally and rather than running the risk that Parliament would act in defiance of our own customs, will the Prime Minister respect Canadian custom, and will he withdraw his resolution until the court has decided whether it is lawful for Parliament to deal with that resolution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could elaborate a little bit on what he calls the custom. As far as I can study Parliament, it is customary for Parliament to deal with matters, and it is also customary for citizens or various parties to disagree in the courts. This process has always happened, and if Parliament were to interrupt its work every time somebody claims that its work is illegal, then we would be doing no work at all. That is the custom in this land. We do our work. The courts do theirs.

REQUEST FOR FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I will naturally accept the invitation of the Prime Minister to argue that case later in the day.

The Prime Minister will know that Premier Blakeney has now indicated that eight premiers expect to discuss today or, if not today, very, very soon—but probably today—details of a new constitutional proposal, which was discussed in general terms in Winnipeg on Tuesday, a constitutional proposal which would let Canadians decide our Canadian conduct here in Canada.

In light of this statement by Premier Blakeney and in light of the meeting which has occurred in Winnipeg this week, is the Prime Minister prepared to set aside his own stubborn deadlines, and is he prepared, in the national interest as the leader of the national government, actively to seek a meeting on constitutional change with the Canadian premiers before he bulldozes this resolution through Parliament and takes the Canadian question to another country?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, we have been discussing this subject with the premiers since the spring of 1968, in a constant fashion through the decade. We discussed it very intensively beginning, I believe, around June 5 of last year. We had a first ministers' meeting.

We have, in the resolution now, a provision that discussions must go on for the next two years in order that we agree on an amending formula, following which, if we still cannot agree after that fixed period of two years—which hardly seems like bulldozing, to use the phrase of the Leader of the Opposition—then the people will be asked to decide for us in a referendum. Discussions are not only wanted; they are called for in the resolution before the House.

• (1120)

The Leader of the Opposition goes on to make the point, I think his words were "let Canadians decide". Madam Speaker, that is what we are asking: let the Canadians in this House decide and let us decide—

Some hon. Members: Call an election.

Mr. Trudeau: We are prepared to let this House decide any time. We will even let an amendment come to a vote.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INITIATION OF DISCUSSIONS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): The Prime Minister appears to be under the illusion that his resolution has already passed and that the provinces are today without the power which his resolution tries to take away from them as he moves this nation towards a unitary state. That is not the situation in this country today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The Prime Minister has not yet succeeded in his goal of changing the fundamental nature of this country. There are provincial governments which represent the people of Canada as well as this Parliament does. They have a role to play in constitutional discussion. My question to the Prime Minister is this: since we know that he has his representatives over in Britain trying to make a deal with the government of another country, I should like to ask him whether he personally, or through his senior representatives, since the meeting in Winnipeg of the eight premiers on Tuesday, has been in touch or has initiated discussions with those premiers, to see if it might be possible to arrange a meeting which would allow all the governments of Canada representing all the people of Canada to come together here in our country to agree on a Canadian Constitution in a Canadian way, rather than following the practice which the Leader of the NDP in the province of Saskatchewan has said leads to bitterness in this country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Clark: My question to the Prime Minister is whether he personally, or through any of his intermediaries, sought a meeting with the premiers since the Tuesday meeting in Winnipeg.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talks about taking power from the provinces to make Canada a unitary state.

An hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Trudeau: Surely if there is any shift of power in this resolution before the House, it gives more power to the provinces—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: That's a lie.

Mr. Trudeau:—in two areas, Madam Speaker—

An hon. Member: At least blush a little bit.

Mr. Trudeau:—more powers to the provinces in defining the role which they would play in any amending formula in the future. It gives more power to the provinces—

An hon. Member: Just tell the truth, Pierre.

Mr. Trudeau:—in giving them greater jurisdictional resources by having what they do not have now, the power to levy indirect taxes and the power to regulate interprovincial trade. So if there is any shift of power from one government to the other, Madam Speaker, in these two areas it is a shift to the provinces.

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Trudeau: I am told to answer the question, Madam Speaker.

An hon. Member: Have you sought a meeting?

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition, in asking his question, made the assertion that there was a shift of power from the provinces. I fail to see how the opposite side lets the Leader of the Opposition make allegations before posing his question but would not let me answer those allegations before the question is answered.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: The question was whether I had sought to communicate with the premiers since the meeting in Winnipeg last Wednesday. The answer is no, nor have they attempted to communicate with me.

• (1125)

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, by the Prime Minister's logic, he must have believed he was giving more power to the people he had incarcerated when he introduced the War Measures Act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Why did the Prime Minister not seek a meeting with representatives of provincial governments after the meeting on Tuesday? Will he tell the House of Commons whether he will initiate those discussions, as the leader of the national Government of Canada, to see if we can find a way to change our Constitution in our country, rather than shipping our business off to the British?

An hon. Member: You are rather desperate, Joe.

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Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition refers to the people incarcerated under the War Measures Act.

An hon. Member: Four hundred and fifty persons.

Mr. Trudeau: Let me remind him that his party and his leader supported the invocation of the War Measures Act.

Mr. Andre: We believed you; that was the problem.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It was the last time we believed you.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Other hon. members of the House want to ask questions. I have already allowed the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition an extra question, which is not unusual. But we need the co-operation of the House so that I can allow everybody who wants to put a question today to be included in the Question Period. So, I would ask hon. members not to shout; we must conduct this debate in a serene fashion—

An hon. Member: Serene!

Madam Speaker:—and I would like members to co-operate—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker:—with me.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, in so far as incarcerating people under the War Measures Act is concerned I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that they were incarcerated by the administration of justice of the province of Quebec; that they were in their prisons, by their policemen, by their acts; and that this was recognized when the government of Quebec paid damages to many of the people who had been incarcerated by them as a result of the War Measures Act.

The Leader of the Opposition asked if I would initiate discussions with the premiers. I have replied to that. We have been discussing for many months. A time comes when somebody has to make up his mind. The premiers seem unable to make up their minds because they have been meeting since October trying to find some alternative that they would even agree with among themselves. They have not communicated any such agreement to myself, to the press or, I take it, to the Leader of the Opposition. But I will initiate discussions with them, as soon as Canada has its own Constitution and as soon as Canadians have given themselves the means to improve that Constitution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF REFERENDUM PROVISIONS IN CONSTITUTIONAL RESOLUTION

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He said that he is giving more powers to the provinces; it is passing strange that eight of them would be rejecting those additional powers.

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Epp: But I want to ask the Prime Minister—

An hon. Member: Say no more.

Mr. Epp: In his press conference yesterday the Prime Minister said, "What I want is the provinces to find some agreement among themselves", and he also said that he was willing to reduce the seven provinces to six, as well as the 80 per cent requirement. In view of the fact that the provinces have asked for the power to remove the odious referendum provisions in his proposals—

Mr. Lalonde: Not Ontario, not New Brunswick.

Mr. Epp: —is he now willing to remove the referendum provisions and, in fact, bring about the kind of consensus which he said yesterday he was willing to accept?

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): More applause?

Mr. Clark: Not for you.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Provencher said that it is passing strange the provinces would reject the additional powers we are giving them. I found that strange, too, and I said so in my speech on Monday that, in a sense, I regretted the amendment moved by the Leader of the NDP which would give more power to the provinces, because the provinces have still not said that they accepted those additional powers. They want even more powers yet. This proves my point that until the whole shopping list of powers is given to them they will find no agreement. They have not found agreement since this process began and they are not finding agreement now, for the reasons I have stated. They might agree on an amending process, but they will not agree to let it go forward until Mr. Peckford has the offshore—

• (1130)

Mr. Clark: That is not true.

Mr. Trudeau: —until Premier Lévesque has had the right to declare the sovereignty of his province written into the Constitution—

Mr. Clark: That is not true.

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition says it is not true, Madam Speaker. If he had been watching the conference—

Mr. Fraser: You are not an expert on truth!

Mr. Trudeau: —held in September, in Ottawa, he would have said that is exactly the situation which the premiers presented then—

Mr. Clark: And on the Friday morning?

Mr. Trudeau: I have had no evidence of whether they have changed that position now. Has the Leader of the Opposition heard Mr. Peckford say that Canadians could have the Constitution with an amending formula and a basic charter of rights without getting his offshore?

Mr. Clark: Yes, because I have asked.

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition says yes. I wish that Mr. Peckford would state that publicly.

Mr. Clark: Ask him.

Mr. Beatty: What would you do if he did?

Mr. Trudeau: I wish Mr. Peckford would state that publicly rather than through his little buddy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

AGREEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): My supplementary question is to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Frankly, it seems to me from his answer he hopes the provinces do not come up with any consensus. That is the argument he has been using all along. If that consensus is, in fact, reached, even beyond the requirements of his press conference of yesterday, then would he not accept again to go to the bargaining table and try to reach a consensus among Canadians?

I now ask about positive action. In view of the amendment moved in the Senate yesterday, whereby the charter would apply equally to men and women, has the Prime Minister instructed his government House leader and his supporters in the other place to support that amendment expeditiously?

Mr. Broadbent: What hypocrisy! Speed it up for them.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to accept that suggestion and to state quite unequivocally that, if the House leaders of the other parties would agree with ours, then we will instruct the Senate to accept this amendment on women. We will instruct them to accept an amendment which has been negotiated on aboriginal rights.

Mr. Stevens: How about property rights?

Mr. Trudeau: We would let these amendments pass in the Senate and in this House, if we can all agree to do that within the next few days.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!