

Oral Questions

Mr. Lalonde: In response to the question raised by the hon. member, I invite him to read *Hansard* once in a while. I was in the House last week and I indicated that the officials of Eldorado Nuclear would indeed be before the committee tonight, if my hon. friend has any questions to ask.

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THE CONSTITUTIONSTATEMENT MADE BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON ISSUE OF
COMPENSATION TO PROVINCES

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that over the weekend, and after the passage of the resolution in the House of Commons, the Minister of Justice said—and I believe I am quoting him correctly—the government was “still open to discuss” the final compensation issue. He also gave as his view that if the agreement of the province of Quebec could be secured to that matter, the agreement of the other nine provinces would be relatively easy.

Could the Prime Minister tell us, first of all, whether the Minister of Justice was stating a policy of the government in his responses, and second, whether there is any initiative which the federal government is considering to take now to bring the people of Quebec into the constitutional Accord before the constitutional resolution leaves Canada in the next few days?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the answer to the last question is no, we are not taking any positive initiative now. The government has said, and the Minister of Justice and I have said, that the Constitution will still be amendable once it is in Canada. If there are reasonable solutions to problems which Quebec sees, we will discuss them in Canada among Canadians, as the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition always said we should be doing. That is our position at this stage.

I think even the Leader of the Opposition was convinced last week that Mr. Lévesque would not sign anything with Canada. The Leader of the Opposition offered him a compromise on compensation, and another on language, I believe. The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech, said that he would really ask these questions of Mr. Lévesque—and I may be paraphrasing—to see whether Mr. Lévesque really believed in Canada or not. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, he got a negative answer from Mr. Lévesque on those proposals that he made.

It seems to me that we cannot now hold off the patriation of the Constitution and the intention of Canada to have an amending formula which will permit us to continue discussions between provinces, hopefully including Quebec.

THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPEDRECOMMENDATION MADE BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO BRING
DISABLED PERSONS UNDER PROTECTION OF CANADIAN HUMAN
RIGHTS CODE

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State. May I congratulate him on assuming his new responsibilities for the disabled. It is an action that we on this side have been recommending for the past ten years. I would like to ask the Secretary of State, as my first question to him, what action is he contemplating on the two basic recommendations, at least the last of the two basic recommendations that our Special Committee on the Disabled made in respect to action which must be taken during the International Year of Disabled Persons if we are to establish credibility?

Because of the long delay in government action on behalf of the disabled, we suggested that Parliament Hill become completely accessible during the International Year of Disabled Persons. That has been accomplished. Prior to that, the disabled came through the garbage entrance.

Even more fundamental is the second recommendation that the disabled must be brought under the terms of reference of the Canadian Human Rights Code during the International Year of Disabled Persons. We have just three weeks to go. Will he be able to act upon that vitally important recommendation of the committee, which action is necessary if our credibility is to be maintained?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I would like to pay tribute to him for his long-term and very sincere interest in this very difficult question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: At the same time may I acknowledge the extremely valuable work that has been provided by the hon. member for Don Valley East as chairman of the committee, and his continuing interest in this field.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: I hope that both of these hon. members, and others, will be available to assist me in relation to the responsibility of co-ordinating responses to the recommendations. The hon. member is probably aware of the fact that the government has already acted upon 56 of the recommendations in the report. My officials are working on this issue, and I expect to be able to file a report on the government's achievements with regard to phase 1 of the recommendations before the Christmas recess.

I have recently undertaken the task of co-ordinating phases 2 and 3, and will be reporting in due course to the House with reference to those. I hope that the information which the hon. member has asked for will be well covered in the report that I will table before the Christmas recess.