

Oral Questions

[Translation]

NATIONAL UNITY

REPORTED STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice.

It has to do with a minor mathematical problem. The minister will enlighten the House. Yesterday the minister answered questions asked by my leader and by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I think I saw the article published in the *Reader's Digest* which mentioned four-fifths of the program of the Parti Québécois and another fifth, which equals 100 per cent, in my view. To that the minister answered that it is out of the question to negotiate sovereignty. So I would ask him today—because he certainly had time to read that article—whether he can tell us if the newsman reported his statement accurately and, if not, I would let him answer my question?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no, and I gave notice to the House that I would raise a question of privilege at 3 p.m. on that matter.

Mr. La Salle: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

When the minister says the answer is no, does that mean that the newsman did not accurately report his statements?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I shall demonstrate that at three o'clock.

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[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMYOVERVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT—CRITICISM OF CLC TO
RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister who in answer to one of my colleagues earlier today with respect to the Overview Committee report on labour and business said that a careful and serious response has been given to that report. The Deputy Prime Minister went on to talk about the consultative process.

In view of the fact that the CLC stated today that the federal government never gave the Overview Committee the opportunity to have a detailed dialogue on its report in the long discussions that went into the construction of its recommendations, is the Deputy Prime Minister saying that there was a careful and serious response through the consultative process, or is he saying that the CLC statement is false?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I gather that the debate would be about what constitutes a detailed examination or a detailed dialogue, but the hon. member should

[Mr. Lapointe.]

recall the nature of this process. It began with 23 sectoral studies which were launched by the Prime Minister and the provincial premiers. These sectoral studies were then examined by the Overview Committee, which made recommendations on the sectoral studies. They were presented to the government, and it is at this time that the government has prepared its response to the recommendations.

If the hon. member reads the report, he will understand that it is a careful, well developed response to these serious recommendations. This is but one step in the dialogue. The hon. member should look at the title of this document, which is "Action for Industrial Growth—Continuing the Dialogue". The dialogue has not ceased and it is hoped that those who participated in the Overview Committee will continue the dialogue by making their response to what is contained in this document.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister said that this is just one step in the dialogue. For a number of years we have been hearing from the government about steps in the dialogue with labour, the result of which has been the withdrawal of labour from the Economic Council of Canada and from the Canada Labour Relations Council, and now the warning that the Congress, as is stated in its press release, is forced to reconsider its participation in future exercises of this type.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared to make a commitment, now, to meet again with the labour and business side to reconsider what is clearly, on the basis of the allegations that have been made today, a shallow and inconsiderate response to the Overview Committee?

● (1500)

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I reject entirely the hon. member's description of this particular report. It is the very opposite of a shallow and superficial document. If it had been regarded as such by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Congress would not have reacted so strongly and politically by describing it as a pre-election document. One does not describe a document as being shallow and superficial unless one finds something very worth-while in it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL DEFENCESUGGESTION OVERSEAS ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL RECEIVE
FREE MAILING PRIVILEGES

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the fact that certain of our armed forces personnel posted overseas have free mailing privileges, will the minister advise the House whether he has had any discussions with the Postmaster General with a view to offering all armed forces personnel posted overseas free mailing privileges?