

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE AS TO
CONSTITUTIONALITY

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

In view of the constitutional difficulties raised by the housing problem, in connection with the respective jurisdiction of the federal and provincial governments, is it the intention of the Prime Minister to call at his earliest convenience a federal-provincial conference where the parties concerned could agree on the constitutionality of the housing problem and take a decision in the best interests of all Canadians?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is no doubt aware that many federal-provincial conferences have been held on housing, and it was precisely because no agreement was reached to give increased power to the federal government that we are now in such a predicament.

Also, a little more than a month ago the minister met in Toronto with the provincial ministers responsible for housing, and the matter was then discussed once again. Therefore, the house should not think there have been no consultations between the federal and the provincial governments on that subject and its constitutional aspect.

Mr. Asselin: I would like to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Prime Minister assure us that at the constitutional conference to be held in June, the problem of housing will be on the agenda to enable the parties concerned to make a decision?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. member and his party question the provincial competence with regard to housing. The hon. member shakes his head in dissent. All I can say then, Mr. Speaker, is that the constitutional conference will take place as expected, according to the prepared agenda.

[English]

RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING IN INTERIM
PERIOD FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF
MINISTER

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not hear part of the announcement made by the Prime Minister, but I did not hear any date mentioned in the

[Mr. Hees.]

announcement. May I ask the right hon. gentleman when the resignation of the Minister of Transport is to become effective, and if it becomes effective immediately, would the right hon. gentleman inform us who has been put in charge of housing in the meantime, pending the appointment of another minister?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The minister asked that his resignation become effective on April 30, and it is this resignation that I have advised the Deputy Governor General to accept.

Mr. Lewis: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the right hon. gentleman inform the house whether the minister who resigned is to carry on all his duties relevant to transport and to housing for the next few days—there are about six days still left—or whether the housing matters, which include public housing, urban renewal and other matters under discussion, are to remain under the table until a new minister is appointed.

Mr. Trudeau: The relevancy of the date is that there would be no cabinet meeting before next Thursday, and by that time the minister's resignation will have become effective. In the meantime I expect that the minister wants to use the remaining days, not to initiate or discuss policy but to clear up some outstanding matters before his resignation becomes effective.

Mr. Lewis: Can one have an assurance from the Prime Minister that any requests or applications by municipalities for public housing assistance, urban renewal assistance or assistance in other fields will receive attention during the next week, or will they have to wait until a new appointment is made?

Mr. Fairweather: The mail will not be in anyway.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Témiscamingue wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): No, Mr. Speaker, my question deals with another matter.

[English]

POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER RESIGNATIONS—
PARTICIPATION IN DEBATE

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In