

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!