

which is being discussed now at the official level. This, it would seem to me, would be the proper way in which the question of municipal representation and jurisdiction under the constitution should be arrived at, as part of the discussion of the division of powers between the federal government and the provinces.

Mr. Stanfield: As a further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister considering or is he prepared to suggest to the constitutional conference that its terms of reference be broadened to include a consideration of participation by municipal units in inter-governmental conferences?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be unwise to do so. The municipalities, legally speaking and constitutionally speaking, are creatures of the provinces. I hope this subject will be brought before a conference, but I do not think it would be proper for the federal government to press it or to impose it on the provinces. I hope it would come by way of initiative from the municipalities themselves, as they suggested they would do, or by way of provincial action at the first initiative; but I repeat that the federal government would of course be very happy and anxious to discuss all these aspects of it.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Prime Minister.

Could he tell us whether, in agreement with the provinces, he would put on the order paper an item for the consideration of the possible use of the Bank of Canada to help finance municipalities?

[English]

OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES AT MEETINGS
HELD IN CAMERA

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, arising out of the information which the Prime Minister gave the house some days ago, that this time the conference would be in camera, I would like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether, in spite of the fact that it is not going to be open to the public, he and the prime ministers of the provinces are giving consideration to inviting members of opposition parties as observers to these in camera discussions?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): This had not been contemplated, Mr. Speaker, for the reason that I gave the other day

Inquiries of the Ministry
about holding the conferences proper in camera. They will not be conferences merely of the representatives of the public, the ministers and the prime ministers, but will be conferences which officials will also be attending. This mixture was requested by some of the provinces themselves. It was not a federal initiative, but we agreed to it because it seemed like a plausible and acceptable idea. When we have such a mixture of ministers and officials we feel the conferences should be held in camera.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, as a further supplementary question, precisely because of the nature of the meeting I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would not reconsider the refusal, and again discuss with the prime ministers of the provinces that because the conference will be held in camera, there would not be value in having other members of parliament and other members of the legislatures in opposition parties knowing what is going on in this on-going dialogue about the constitution?

Mr. Trudeau: I would be prepared to hear representations from the provinces on this, but I stated my own personal inclination and I understand that is also the inclination of the provinces. If they feel otherwise, I would be prepared to reconsider.

Hon. Robert Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Do I understand that the Prime Minister would object to a member of an opposition party being included in a provincial delegation to the conference? Does he not feel it might increase national understanding, or the understanding generally in respect of the problems involved in constitutional reform, if observers from opposition parties both at the provincial and federal level were included in this confidential discussion?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, in so far as the Leader of the Opposition is repeating part of the question of the member of the New Democratic party my answer is the same; but if he is suggesting that some province might wish to include any member of the opposition as part of its delegation, then it is up to the officials of that province if they want to be assisted by persons from the opposition.

Mr. Stanfield: Do I understand my hon. friend to suggest that he does not require any assistance from us on this side of the house?

Mr. Trudeau: That is a different matter, Mr. Speaker.