

Oral Questions

before doing anything? Is he going to deal personally with this problem?

[English]

Hon. Ron Atkey (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, all I can ask is, where was the hon. member in the last Parliament when those legislative provisions which are the subject of the protest were being debated? I would welcome his input to the review process. I will agree with the hon. member that it is, indeed, a serious situation there; it is one of instability. I have had consultations with the provincial minister responsible for the area and we are in the process of attempting to come up with some sort of joint program to alleviate the very serious situation which exists there. Nevertheless, I go back to the original point, Mr. Speaker, that the cause of the protest and the cause of the problem are the amendments introduced in Bill C-14 of the previous government, and that is where the blame will lie.

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TRANSPORT**LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT—INQUIRY REGARDING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO B.C.**

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister; I see he has returned. In the recent federal election campaign his party promised the people of Canada that the Conservative government would give considerable financial assistance for the provision of urban transit systems. In view of the fact that the province of British Columbia and the lower mainland are very shortly going to be making a decision on whether to proceed with the development of urban rapid transit facilities, is the Prime Minister prepared to tell this House when his government intends to live up to this important election promise, and specifically what financial assistance will be made available to the people of British Columbia for light rapid transit?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the hon. member for being briefly out of the House. I was on my way to Government House, for reasons that should not alarm anyone in this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You might as well get it over with.

Mr. Clark: If there is enough encouragement here, gentlemen, I will . . . !

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: I know that the hon. member is raising a serious matter; it is one that is under consideration by the Minister of Transport. All I can undertake to do at this stage is to draw to the attention of the Minister of Transport the representation that has been made by the hon. member. We will naturally be interested in looking at matters that might be proposed by the

[Mr. Corbin.]

government of British Columbia or, indeed, other governments with significant mass transit potential.

I should also indicate to the hon. member that as part of the energy package we are proposing we will want to explore actively with provincial governments and municipal authorities across the country the possibility of increased reliance on mass transit as a means of encouraging energy conservation.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL UNITY**QUEBEC REFERENDUM—INQUIRY WHEN PRIME MINISTER WILL GIVE HIS IMPRESSIONS OF WHITE PAPER**

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question, although less vigorous, is for the Prime Minister and is supplementary to the one asked earlier by the hon. member for the beautiful riding of Drummond.

On November 1, to be very specific, the Prime Minister said in this very House he intended to give his impressions of the white paper of the Quebec government once he had time to digest it. Has he have time to digest it now, and in what form is he going to give his impressions of the white paper in the days or weeks to come?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I indicated immediately after the white paper was released that I do not accept at all its underlying principle. It is not a principle we can accept as a federal government because it rejects the concept of federalism. I do not intend to answer the white paper page by page, paragraph by paragraph, because I believe the position of the federal government is clear enough.

THE QUEBEC REFERENDUM—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBILITY OF ANSWERING EACH PROPOSAL IN WHITE PAPER

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the right hon. Prime Minister.

It would still be very useful for hon. members who intend to participate in that referendum campaign to have an answer paragraph by paragraph, concept by concept. Could the Prime Minister consider that need and perhaps make arrangements with the various departments so that those who intend to participate actively in the campaign can collect material, check a few hypotheses, get a few statistics they might want to use?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can say we do not intend to answer the paper released by the government of Quebec paragraph by paragraph. I believe such a policy would not be useful to federalism, but I do believe it would be really good for all members of the House to have access to the facts and pertinent information of use in the fight