

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The Prime Minister has risen on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I rose on a question regarding the Prime Minister's statement the other day as reported in the *Toronto Star* of February 25. The Prime Minister has not, up until now, denied that statement and the Prime Minister—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This matter was raised earlier by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, as he has just mentioned, and I suggested at the time that this was a matter of debate. Perhaps the minister might be allowed to reply to the question which he had started to answer.

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, in respect of the long-term energy discussions with the United States on the substances I have referred to, we have a very complete review of the availability of supply from the years 1960 to 1990, as published in the Energy Board report last December. In respect of water, as both the Prime Minister and I have clearly stated we do not have that kind of assessment of the availability of resources needed by Canada, and until we do there can be none for sale. Both the Prime Minister and I have stated that very clearly.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's statement that we do not have a surplus of water may I ask the Prime Minister whether he was correctly or incorrectly reported when he said, according to his statement to Carleton University students—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in view of the Prime Minister's statement on a question of privilege, is it the government's intention to set up a commission similar to the Borden Commission, which assessed our resources in respect of natural gas and crude petroleum, to determine the needs of Canada, both domestic and industrial, as far as water is concerned for the foreseeable future?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): This question is being studied intensively now by the department concerned. There is no

[Mr. Trudeau.]

commission to this effect. This is something we are obviously trying to assess.

On the matter of my statement it might enlighten the House to know that I was not referring to future potential the other day. I said there are hundreds of—I see you looking impatiently, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure I was not. Is the right hon. member for Prince Albert rising on a supplementary?

Mr. Diefenbaker: No.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I should like to ask him whether his department agrees with the policy of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as stated in Bill C-187, that a board be set up to study diversion of Yukon and other northern waters to the United States?

Mr. Greene: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government always speaks with one voice.

Mr. Baldwin: But with a forked tongue.

An hon. Member: And with two heads.

Mr. Nesbitt: One voice and two tongues.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether he would be good enough to complete the statement he had started?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, what I did say was that there was a figure of 100 million gallons and more of water pouring into the sea every day. Obviously this is fresh water that we have no way of selling today. Before we contract in the future for the selling of any kind of water, if we decide to do so, we would obviously have to know what our inventory is, and our future needs and, if there is surplus water, how much would be surplus. The quotation which is ascribed to me concerns not our policy but a statement of fact and I would be surprised if the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands were to deny it.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Prime Minister or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources would be prepared to make a statement on motions elaborating on the nature of