

Inquiries of the Ministry

co-equal members of the commonwealth has been made the flag of another member of the commonwealth, as representing the commonwealth and as one of the two flags of that second country?

Mr. Pearson: I will be glad to deal with that in detail at the appropriate time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister says it has been done before. May I ask him where? One has just to ask the question to call the bluff.

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the distinguished Secretary of State for External Affairs who is the Acting Prime Minister. I should like to ask him whether he intends to suggest to the government to reconsider the decision taken and to accept the request made by the hon. member for St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville (Mr. Dupuis) on January 23, 1961, for a referendum respecting the choice of a flag?

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder if the hon. member would put this question on the order paper.

[Translation]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I have for some time directed many questions to the Prime Minister and today I am directing one to his representative, but no answer is ever given me. I am denied answers to my questions. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs is well aware of the high regard I have for him, I would like him to answer in the negative or the affirmative, by yes or no; thus, the house and the whole Canadian people will be satisfied.

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is completely out of order, and he must know it. There is no question of privilege. There may be a point of order, but there is no question of privilege.

[Translation]

Mr. Pigeon: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I will put my question to the Acting Prime Minister in a different way—

[Text]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am quite well aware that the hon. member does not wish to cause the Chair any extra trouble.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Mr. Pigeon: No, Mr. Speaker, I do not want trouble with you.

[Later:]

Hon. Léon Balcer (Three Rivers): I should like to ask the Minister of Transport if he is in a position to report to the house on his recent trip to Great Britain and on his mission to Her Majesty the Queen when he conveyed to Her Majesty the decision of the Canadian cabinet to bring forward a two-flag resolution in this house?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, who like me is a privy councillor, has no doubt read the privy councillor's oath and will know quite well why it would be improper for me to make any kind of reply to this question, certainly beyond anything that was said yesterday by the Prime Minister. Therefore, I have nothing whatever to say about it.

Mr. Balcer: I wonder if the minister would agree that the same rules should apply to the premiers of the provinces as well as to members of parliament? I do not see why Mr. Smallwood should be informed about these things before any members of this house.

Mr. Pickersgill: Nor do I.

Mr. Pigeon: May I ask a supplementary question. Did the government consult Mr. Lesage concerning its two flags?

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the Minister of Transport if, during his audience with Her Majesty the Queen, the possibility of postponing the royal visit to Canada was discussed.

[Text]

Mr. Pickersgill: I have nothing whatever to add to what I have already said.

[Later:]

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, may I be granted the courtesy of asking this question. Could I ask the Minister of Transport, as a great historian—

Mr. Pigeon: The question period is over now.

Mr. Winch: I have the floor at the moment. Could I ask the Minister of Transport, as a great historian, if he will bring us up to date