

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pinard:** Madam Speaker, obviously, the question being the same, it would be ridiculous of me to contradict myself and give a reply other than the one I just gave. But may I be allowed, through the question, to indicate to the Leader of the Opposition who questioned the Right Hon. Prime Minister about the matter that, as far as I am concerned, since he mentioned my name in his question, I have never read the letter he referred to; I only learned of it at two o'clock on November 6, 1980.

[*English*]

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE  
PROCEEDINGS WILL BE TELEVISED

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The government House leader said in this House on October 24 that the committee would have the right to decide whether or not to have television, and the Speaker has ruled that she does not have the authority to authorize the use of television unless the House gives her that authority. Therefore, considering the historical importance of this constitutional debate and the right of the people of Canada, through television, to witness this debate, will the Prime Minister assure the House that the government will bring in a motion later today authorizing that committee to televise its proceedings?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, that seems to be an exact repetition of the question asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** It is referring to what the Leader of the New Democratic Party calls a ruling, which I have stated is not a ruling in my view. Perhaps the hon. member's seatmate can tell us if it is a ruling when the Speaker writes a letter, of which none of us seems to have any knowledge on this side, or very few of us anyhow that I see around me. Therefore, I do not conceive how the official opposition can seriously maintain that a ruling has been brought down when just about nobody on this side of the House knows of its existence.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Here it is.

**Mr. Clark:** Is Smith a nobody too?

**Mr. Trudeau:** I see the bearded one over there wanting to get the floor, and maybe you should give him the floor, Madam Speaker, if he wants to ask a question.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that that answer is not only nonsense, but it was pedantic nonsense of the worst kind.

### *Oral Questions*

Since the referendum some of us in the country representing all three political parties across the land have been prepared to put aside petty politics to create a package for constitutional change which might unite this country. Would the Prime Minister not agree, apart from substance in effecting constitutional change, process in a democracy is just as important?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** If the Prime Minister agrees with that, why is he refusing now to say the people of Canada are going to be permitted the right to see one of the most important debates in the history of our country on television?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, I find it objectionable that the hon. member asked his first question in terms of a so-called ruling that has not been given and asked me to base a position of the government on a ruling that does not exist. If he wants to term that pedantic, that is his right. But it would have been less pedantic on his part if he had asked a question without prefacing it with a falsehood.

In so far as my position and that of the government is concerned, it is that the committee can decide what it wants. If hon. members feel very strongly about it, they have representatives on this committee. I am sure they can reopen the question if they want. I am not a member of it. I am abiding by the rules of this House—

**An hon. Member:** You gag your own gang.

**Mr. Trudeau:**—in not giving instructions to that committee.

**Mr. Clark:** Not as the Speaker interprets them.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I believe that in every other circumstance members opposite would want me to conduct myself in that way.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Madam Speaker, we have just witnessed at this time, the complete abdication of national leadership, which is so important in this debate.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

● (1430)

**Mr. Broadbent:** Considering that only one Liberal on that committee, the hon. member for Lincoln, who was widely reported to have been considered to be named chairman of the committee, favoured television and public debate, will the Prime Minister at last admit the truth that it was his government and his Liberal party which decided that television is not to be used, and that the people of Canada are going to be shut out from this important debate?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman suggests that I admit the truth. I have been telling the truth on this.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** I really find that offensive.

**Mr. Clark:** You find the truth offensive?