

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

my original question to the point where I would ask if consideration could be given to granting the people of Canada an opportunity to express themselves on the issue of Canadian unity through a public opinion poll. I do not think we can say we have failed, but to this date this parliament and the provincial legislators have not come up with leadership or clear policy on this question. Since this is so, it might be advantageous for us to consider taking a poll of the people themselves whereby they can give leadership to us. Therefore I ask that consideration be given to consulting with the provinces, with a view to seeking the views of the Canadian people on all the issues involved in this very grievous question that affects us today, the question of national unity.

**Mr. John R. Matheson (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, the B. and B. royal commission is now seized of the responsibility of reporting on the feelings of Canadians in relation to this very important question. Undoubtedly in the course of its work it will have conducted surveys which will be incorporated in its report, which report the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) hopes may be available by the end of November.

Surveys on the question of national unity have been commissioned by private concerns from time to time. There have been such

surveys in the past; no doubt such surveys will be made in the future. One might ask as a principle of political economy whether it is sound to conduct government through the expediency of surveys. Certainly there are those who would urge that this is not conducive to a healthy democratic process. Moreover, it would be difficult for the federal government to get involved directly in this field without accusations of partiality, and the like.

The views of the Prime Minister and of his government are so clearly established that national unity really is not in question. Political parties, members of parliament and constituency associations can add to reflect the feelings of the public in most questions. It is by these soundings that policies are influenced. My hon. friend represents a constituency, and I represent a constituency, and collectively we all offer a resounding endorsement in this chamber for the continued unity of our nation.

May I say in response to the hon. member's important query that as long as we are all of one mind in this matter, as we are, with almost complete unity, this would not appear to be the kind of question that should be put before a province, or all of the country, by way of referendum.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.21 p.m.

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