

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Hees: Yes, Mr. Speaker; the Liberal convention in Ottawa.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, any resolutions from such an important and successful meeting will certainly be taken very seriously by the government.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Was the Minister of Labour voicing government opinion and policy when he advocated North American free trade at the meeting last evening?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend should wait until I receive the exact text of what the minister said, and then he will realize that it is not quite as straightforward and as simple as the hon. member has indicated.

Mr. Hees: I would be glad to send a copy of what the minister said over to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, and then I would appreciate it if he would give me an answer to my question.

[Later:]

Mr. Pearson: While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, and to save the hon. member for Northumberland from getting to his feet, because he has been trying to rise to ask me if I have yet read the clipping he was good enough to send me, may I say I have and, as I suspected, his question is based on a press report which does not quote the Minister of Labour but merely states that at the convention last night the Minister of Labour spoke strongly in favour of free trade. Mr. Speaker, Liberal ministers have been speaking strongly in favour of free trade for 99 years and Liberal governments have been doing something about it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

UNITED NATIONS

SOUTH-WEST AFRICA—CANADIAN POSITION RESPECTING MANDATE OF SOUTH AFRICA

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. A radio report from New York last week indicated that the minister was performing on a tightrope at the United Nations. Would the minister give the House of Commons a demonstration in answering the following

[Mr. Pearson.]

question? What is the government's policy with regard to the mandated territory of South-West Africa?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thought I gave my hon. friend a demonstration every time he asked a question in this house. On behalf of the government of Canada I said on Friday the Canadian government felt that because of the practice by the government of South Africa of its apartheid policy in South-West Africa, and because of its failure to report pursuant to resolutions of the United Nations general assembly, South Africa had forfeited its right to administer the mandate. We recommended the establishment of a committee of members of the UN to consider what steps could be taken to give effect to a resolution which I suspect will be passed some day this week in the general assembly.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the last answer of the minister, with which I entirely agree, would the minister inform the house why Canada abstained at the United Nations from voting on a motion to impose sanctions against South Africa for the very policy for which he has just shown his contempt?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is referring to a former resolution. He does not identify the resolution in question. There can be no question about the position of Canada and our feeling that South Africa has forfeited the right to administer the mandate because of its practice of apartheid and its failure to live up to the UN principles of accountability.

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question which follows upon that asked by the hon. member for York South. This vote was on the question of racial discrimination, with regard to which a resolution was brought into the United Nations last week. If Canada felt so strongly toward this country, why did we abstain from voting on this resolution?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oxford.

Mr. Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, the minister asked about which resolution we were talking, and I have told him in order that we may have an answer.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question which I would direct