

Oral Questions

conference on criminology, and that the invitation was extended on behalf of the Canadian delegation at the 1970 UN conference on criminology which was held in August, some six months after January 1970 when approval was given to the Solicitor General for Canada to be the host?

● (1120)

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government is, of course, the only authority that could invite the conference to come to Canada. I would remind the hon. gentleman, however, that it was at the invitation of the government of Ontario that we extended this invitation. They said that they would like to have the conference in Toronto and, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, this is the kind of co-operation that we are trying to maintain with the province.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister deny that Mr. Grossman extended the invitation at the August 1970 conference, speaking on behalf of the Canadian delegation and in that sense for Canada, because of the absence of the Canadian minister who was supposed to be leading the delegation, no doubt for urgent reasons?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what it is that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to prove.

Mr. Nowlan: The truth.

Mr. Sharp: The Canadian government, of course, takes responsibility for inviting conferences of the United Nations to be held in Canada, but I repeat that the government of Ontario suggested to the Canadian government that they would like to be host, and indeed at that time offered to take part in the hospitality and other arrangements that had to be made.

Mr. Stanfield: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the Prime Minister said in the House yesterday that "Mr. Grossman of the Ontario government stuck his head out and invited this conference to come to Canada in the first place", I would ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he has any possible explanation for this apparent misleading of the House by the Prime Minister giving the impression that the invitation was extended by Mr. Grossman on his own, whereas in fact, as the Acting Prime Minister has admitted this morning, the government of Canada fully authorized the Canadian delegation to issue the invitation and Mr. Grossman was speaking only on behalf of the Canadian delegation because of the absence of the Canadian minister. Has the Acting Prime Minister any possible explanation to give the House of this apparent effort of the Prime Minister to mislead the House in this regard?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister was quite right to have pointed out to this House that the Ontario government, which is now suggesting it does not want the conference to be held in Canada, was the government that originally suggested to the federal government that such invitation should be extended to hold the conference in Toronto, the capital of the province of Ontario.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

SUGGESTION GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS OIL MORE
IMPORTANT THAN ISRAEL

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The explanation given by the Acting Prime Minister is, of course, as fatuous as it is untrue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Arafat is head of the PLO today and has been for the last year or so, though as an organization the PLO was not in existence in 1970. The Acting Prime Minister asks: Well, what can we do? I would ask him whether the answers he gave the Leader of the Opposition are not consistent with the stand taken by the government of Canada in abstaining from voting when the question arose in the United Nations as to whether Arafat should be permitted to appear before the United Nations? At that time Canada's strong stand was to abstain. Then, when there was a resolution critical of Israel Canada abstained. Will the Acting Prime Minister not come clean and admit that the situation is that while the government of Canada pretends it is favourable toward Israel it considers oil more important than Israel?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think that is a despicable suggestion by the right hon. member for Prince Albert who knows that Canada—

Mr. Stanfield: Not as despicable as the Prime Minister was yesterday.

Mr. Sharp: —places its moral principles ahead of any consideration such as he has raised.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, would I be wrong to suggest after the answer given by the Prime Minister yesterday, that from now on answers given in the House will not be based on whether they are true or false, but on whether they are true or "Trudeau"?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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AIRPORTS

PICKERING—POSSIBILITY OF DELAY IN CONSTRUCTION
BECAUSE ONTARIO UNWILLING TO CONSTRUCT ACCESS
ROADS

Mr. A. C. Abbott (Mississauga): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Ontario Minister of Transport tabled a letter in the legislature seeking a delay in the construction of the Pickering airport on the ground that the province of Ontario will not be prepared to spend money for the access highways. Can the Minister of Transport say whether he regards this as a reasonable basis to delay the airport construction, or will he more correctly view it as a further desperate attempt to prop up the political fortunes of the already discredited Davis régime?