

## Oral Questions

● (1520)

## NATIONAL ANTHEMS

## SUGGESTION RECORDING BE MADE BY MUSICIANS IN ARMED FORCES

**Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton):** My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the fact that recordings of the national anthems God Save the Queen and O Canada are not readily available at most distribution or retail facilities across the country, would the hon. gentleman arrange to have the musicians and bands left in the Canadian Armed Forces make recordings of these anthems and have them placed on the market throughout the country?

**Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence):** I shall be pleased to consider that representation.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege with respect to something which has taken place today. I shall state my point as clearly, as carefully and as respectfully as I can and at the end of it, my request will be that Your Honour review certain of today's proceedings as soon as *Hansard* for today is available to you.

Your Honour frequently reminds us of certain rules regarding the question period. One, for example, is that the Chair cannot compel a minister to answer a question. Another is that the Chair cannot be concerned about the quality of an answer. These are rules which Your Honour recites fairly often when a questioner complains that an answer is incomplete, or insufficient or evasive. I submit to Your Honour that if it is not for the Chair to accept complaints about the quality of an answer we are entitled to assume that there should not be an expression from the Chair concerning the quality of an answer which in effect comments in its favour.

Today the leader of this party, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, asked a question which was based on several questions asked yesterday. One of them, addressed to the Prime Minister, asked whether the \$300 million—and we all know what we are talking about—was itself a ceiling or whether the ceiling was 15 per cent. The Prime Minister's reply was:

The figure of \$300 million was arrived at during the session conducted between the ministers I named, the Alberta officials, the Ontario premier and the private companies . . .

Later in the same answer he said:

It was an arrangement put together by all parties each seeking, of course, the interest of the people they had a particular mandate to represent.

My hon. friend thought there was uncertainty about that answer and he therefore put a supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board—was the agreement for \$300 million or was it for 15 per cent. He put it this way:

If the cost goes down, does it mean we pay less, and if the costs go up does it mean we will pay more?

The answer given by the President of the Treasury Board was: "Yes, Mr. Speaker." There followed, as recorded in *Hansard*, several exchanges which make it clear that

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

the House was aware of a misunderstanding or a difference of opinion about the matter between the Prime Minister and the President of Treasury Board.

Today, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby did not ask the same question he asked yesterday. Rather if I may paraphrase what he said he asked: In the light of the uncertainty of yesterday, can we be told which of these answers is correct? Your Honour would not allow him to proceed with the question. If I recall correctly, you said that an unequivocal answer had been given yesterday.

I hope I have demonstrated that the answer given yesterday was not unequivocal. It was equivocal; there were two different answers given inside the House and a third answer outside the House. I submit it was unfair—I know what I am saying, and I am saying it as carefully and respectfully as I can—to cut the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby off, particularly since Your Honour has said so often that the quality of an answer is not the concern of the Chair. That is the question of privilege I wish to bring forward and I make it very seriously. I repeat what I said at the start I would do: I ask Your Honour, once today's *Hansard* is available, to review this whole incident.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly understand the concern of the House leader for the New Democratic Party. I would remind him, though, of the circumstances to which he himself has alluded. Just preceding the phrase of mine which he read from yesterday's *Hansard*, these other words of mine appear:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understood the question but I will attempt to deal with it.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that those words of mine mean what they say. Perhaps I was distracted for some reason, but I had not seen that the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby was trying to make a distinction between the 15 per cent of the \$300 million figure. It is true that in my answer I gave the \$300 million, a figure which had been used by my colleagues and myself. This is, in fact, 15 per cent of \$2 billion. I was perfectly justified in using that figure as, indeed, was Premier Lougheed, Premier Davis, and certainly the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Whether the figure \$300 million stood by itself, or stood as 15 per cent of \$2 billion, was a question to which I was not addressing myself. And my answer makes that perfectly clear.

Then, the hon. member put the question more precisely to the President of Treasury Board, got the answer from him, and I agree with Mr. Speaker that the answer was unequivocal. The House leader of the New Democratic Party then alluded to certain goings on—I presume he meant that *Hansard* records that someone said I was shaking my head one way or another. The House is certainly aware that after my answer, and that of the President of Treasury Board, we talked together; we explained the matter. The matter remained in the unequivocal way in which the President of Treasury Board put it. That was the answer which was given and there was no contradiction such as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre suggests.

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