

Oral Questions

recall that the premiers wanted a communiqué indicating that the matter would be finalized by September.

Mr. Epp: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Has the government been officially and specifically informed by the British government, after the exact nature of the Canadian government patriation package became known on October 2, that Britain would push the package through Parliament at Westminster?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Madam Speaker. The British contacts which have been made, not by myself but I believe by the Minister of the Environment and the Secretary of State for External Affairs who met in Britain early in the fall, indicated that the inclusion of the charter would make it more difficult, which we know.

INQUIRY RESPECTING BRITISH COMMITMENT ON PEOPLE'S PACKAGE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister, today and in a press conference on January 22, when asked as to the date on which he specifically informed the British government of the intention of Canada to include a charter of rights, spoke about general conversations in June regarding a people's package. In his January 22 press conference he said that Mrs. Thatcher was informed in general terms of the interest in a people's package. It is quite important for the House to know exactly what was known by the government of Great Britain at the time it gave any commitment. When was the government of Great Britain advised for the first time in specific terms of the intention of the Government of Canada to include a charter of rights in the patriation package?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, information was given to the British Prime Minister that we were discussing a people's package—equalization, the question of the offshore and the demand of one province to have self-determination written into the Constitution. I cannot assure the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I went into details on each of the many, many items which were discussed during the summer. I told her what the agenda was, what we had discussed at the beginning of June, and they came under all these general headings.

The British Prime Minister did not ask for details or put subquestions. She took the position that if the Parliament of Canada put an address to Her Majesty, the British Parliament would have no choice but to take it as a government measure and to assure its passage. This was not done in ignorance; this was done as a result of British governments, including the former government of Mr. Callaghan, having been asked repeatedly what their position would be when they received the resolution from the Canadian Parliament. I did not seek to justify to the British Prime Minister any of the measures in there. I just said that these were the measures with which we were proceeding and that I would attempt to justify them to

the Canadian Parliament, not to the British Parliament or British government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, what is germane here is that the Prime Minister has been relying for some time upon what he claims was an agreement by Britain to give passage to a measure proposed by the Parliament of Canada. We need to know whether, when the British gave that agreement, they had been fully informed as to the contents of the proposal to which the Prime Minister was making reference. The Prime Minister has indicated that there is now some considerable doubt whether or not Mrs. Thatcher knew in June, when she gave whatever commitment she did give, that a charter of rights would be involved as well as substantial provincial dissent in this country. Could the Prime Minister tell us the specific date on which Britain knew for the first time the specific contents of what the British government was being asked to approve?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I do not know on what date the Prime Minister of Great Britain informed herself in detail of the contents of it. I can tell the hon. member that she was informed of the contents on that day at the end of June when I sat down with her at Downing Street. The Leader of the Opposition should not say that my previous answer left that in considerable doubt. It was made quite clear to her that we were proceeding with this package, hopefully with the consent of the provinces, but the whole point of discussing it together was that perhaps we would not have the consent of the provinces; that was quite clear. The Leader of the Opposition should not try to twist my words and make them sound the contrary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, I would not want to twist the Prime Minister's words or his intention. Is it a fair interpretation of what the Prime Minister said that Prime Minister Thatcher knew in June the Government of Canada intended to include a charter of rights in its package?

Mr. Trudeau: Well, Madam Speaker, unless she was not listening while I was talking or not informed by her people of what all Canadians and the ten premiers knew—because it had been made public in Canada—then the answer to the question is that she did know.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

CHRYSLER CANADA—INQUIRY RESPECTING PRODUCTION IN CANADA OF "WORLD CAR"

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance; it concerns the future of Chrysler. I am sure the Minister of Finance is aware of the vote taken by workers in Canada on the aid package initiated in the United States. I