

Oral Questions

should set up a committee now, just before the end of this part of the session.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You could do it tomorrow if you wanted to.

Mr. Trudeau: The House leader of the Tory party is willing to crowd in business all the time. We would take him as a man of his word if he were indeed able to deal with the business now before the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We have done a little better than you have this session.

Mr. Fraser: If you keep on this will be your third speech in a year.

Mr. Trudeau: We did bring the issue of national unity before the House in a resolution, but the opposition had many, many days during which it could have brought up this subject if indeed it felt it to be important.

Returning to the question put by the Leader of the Opposition, I repeat that the possibility of having a joint parliamentary committee in the next session of parliament is not precluded, but we do not think that at this point in the session we should spend time setting up such a committee and debating it and asking it to operate for the remaining days of this part of the session.

As to the role of members on this side, all I meant was that they are self-starters. They do not have to feel supported by members of the opposition in concerning themselves with national unity. Hon. members opposite can be self-starters, too. You can do it if you try, boys.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to play party games.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: He claims that he is worried about the time it would take. I can give him the guarantee of the official opposition that we would approve in a minute the establishment of a joint committee.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I want to suggest to the Prime Minister with all respect that it is not an adequate response to a question regarding policy to say that the government has not precluded the possibility of giving the Parliament of Canada, which is the only agency which can resolve this question, a continuing role to play in the discussions on this subject. I ask the Prime Minister as clearly as I can why he will not take the initiative now, which he knows will be supported by the House of Commons, and establish today a joint committee of this House and the other place to inquire on a continuing basis into questions of national unity. We are prepared to start work this summer; why is the Prime Minister not?

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear from the Leader of the Opposition that he is prepared to start work on the problem of national unity.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: Get off the arrogance. Shameful. You are a coward.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Next time we will break your arm.

Mr. Trudeau: Why don't you do it right after we come out of the House? Mr. Speaker, I consider that the opposition is in a somewhat contradictory position. They were just telling us last week that national unity is not just one simple subject, it is a matter of how parliament and government deal with the problems of the country. We consider that every day of the year we are dealing with the problems of national unity.

Mr. Paproski: Lalonde says one thing in Quebec and another thing in western Canada. Hypocrites, traitors.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think they are a little "hyped up" over there; I will let them catch their cool and perhaps we will have some traditional questions.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that parliament and the people of Canada have become resigned to this kind of evasion and game playing on the part of the Prime Minister on most questions, but the question of the future of our country is too important for the Prime Minister to play games with.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: He pretends that he gives priority to resolving this problem. Why will the Prime Minister not demonstrate that priority and demonstrate the central role which parliament must play in resolving national questions in a way with which we agree by establishing a joint committee which will act now to give parliament a continuing role to inquire into the resolution of the problems of national unity which face the country?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The second question is a repetition of the first.

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ENERGY**EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO UNITED STATES—INQUIRY AS TO APPLICATIONS AND BASIS OF SWAP ARRANGEMENT**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who unfortunately has left the chamber, so I will direct it to his parliamentary secretary in the hope that he can cast some light on the problem raised by the hon. member for Calgary North. In answering the question from that member the minister said that the question I had asked