

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Trudeau:** I am asked where Mr. Chrétien is. Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice accepted a long while ago—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** A long while ago—

**An hon. Member:** How about MacGuigan?

**Madam Speaker:** Order. I shall have to interrupt the Right Hon. Prime Minister and let the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition formulate another question, because that one just does not seem to be able to be answered while maintaining some order in the House.

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the Prime Minister needs two hours and 20 minutes to answer questions in the House as well.

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

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** Let me ask the Prime Minister whether, as a matter of government policy, he has ruled out the possibility of another first ministers' conference or some other form of serious discussion of a different amending formula, between the federal and provincial governments? Has he ruled out the possibility of that kind of consultation before he forces his particular personal formula through this House using closure, despite the fact the premiers are meeting to seek agreement and despite the request of the Liberal leader in the province of Quebec for an opportunity to discuss this question if he forms the next government?

Will he consider holding another discussion on constitutional matters before he forces his measure by closure through the House of Commons?

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

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition calls it my personal formula. May I remind him it is the formula agreed to by the ten premiers and the Prime Minister in 1971.

**An hon. Member:** No, no.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Well, I hear somebody say "no". I would like to have somebody substantiate that. Premier Davis and Premier Hatfield were there, I was there, the press covered that conference, and it is on record, Madam Speaker, that that is the only time in recent memory—

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Answer the question.

**Mr. Trudeau:** They ask me to answer the question. Did the Leader of the Opposition not say that it was my personal formula, and was he wrong or right in saying that?

**An hon. Member:** Don't be so arrogant.

**Mr. Trudeau:** And if they cannot stand an argument and the truth—

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Trudeau:**—they should not ask questions.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I can see this is caucus day.

• (1425)

## QUERY RESPECTING PROVINCIAL CONSENSUS

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In his speech on Monday he quoted the Hon. George Brown, who made the point in 1865 that the time was now for Canada to form a union. In his speeches George Brown also made the point that one cannot move in a federal state unless there is widespread acceptance of a proposal.

In view of the fact that the provinces now are at a position where a consensus can be reached among eight of the ten provinces on patriation and a formula for amendment, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would accept that consensus as being sufficient for him to reconsider the proposal he has before the House and to meet with the premiers—

**An hon. Member:** You have two years.

**Mr. Epp:**—in order to develop the unity I believe Canadians seek for our country.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, it would be easy and exact to say that the question is hypothetical, and has been for these many months—I should say these many years—when the premiers have not agreed on an amending formula and on patriation, and I have quoted that chapter and verse.

Rather than claim that the question is hypothetical, I would like to put to the hon. member that the resolution before the House does exactly what he hopes to do. It gives the premiers and the federal Prime Minister two years to get together, during which unanimity will be—the hon. member shakes his head. Would he please read the resolution? That is exactly what we say, and I am surprised that as learned a member as the hon. member for Provencher does not know that. We have before us a resolution which says that for the next two years no amendment can be made on basic matters respecting the Constitution without unanimity. That is in the resolution.

**An hon. Member:** We all know that.

**Mr. Trudeau:** If hon. members know that, why are they suggesting that I am in some sense imposing my formula? The formula which is brought in by this resolution calls for unanimity over a period of two years. After two years, if there is not agreement and if there is not consensus—

**Mr. Nielsen:** There is the problem.