

Oral Questions

Mr. Rae: I do not need lectures from the minister telling me how to do my job. I have been in the House waiting for him to make statements.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I must remind the hon. member this is question period. Would he ask a question, please?

Mr. Rae: My question to the minister is this: when is he going to make a statement in the House of Commons indicating what firm steps will be taken to guarantee Canadian shares, and to guarantee that Canadian consumers and Canadian workers will reap the benefits of the Auto Pact, rather than simply making statements outside the House as to what his intentions are over the next 25 years?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, through answers similar to the one I was giving a few moments ago, I was giving this House concrete, definite information on the action we have taken to bring a fair share of investment to this country, to preserve and to add to jobs for Canadian workers. If my hon. friend would spend less time on mock indignation—

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Gray:—and more time listening to what concrete action we are taking, and what action we are going to take, he will be doing a better job than the one he claims he is doing for the people of Canada. At least, in doing what I am doing—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gray:—I can demonstrate concrete action for Canadian workers, and that is more than he can do.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES

MAINTENANCE OF LABRADOR AS PART OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. The minister will know from today's press that a consortium has been formed in the province of Quebec called La Société de Développement Quebec-Labrador-Rigolet Inc., with the acronym LABEC. That consortium has asked the government of Quebec for permission to claim much of the mineral, forest, oil and gas resources of the province of Newfoundland.

If you will bear with me, Madam Speaker. The government of Quebec, would seem to be tacitly approving of this claim based on an anomaly in the law whereby, for example, they claim the government of Quebec did not agree to the privy council boundary definition of 1927. They base that claim on

the amendment of the Constitution of 1871 and the amendment of 1898, which gave to Quebec very much of the territory which is now part of the province of Newfoundland.

My question, Madam Speaker, is simply this: is the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada prepared to state in the House and reassure me, as he did in committee, that as the Attorney General of Canada he would be prepared to argue on behalf of Canada that the boundary between Newfoundland and Quebec, as defined by the privy council, of 1927, is and will remain the boundary between Quebec and Newfoundland?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, I had to deal with that problem in committee. The government's view is that Labrador is part of the province of Newfoundland. Labrador is not part of the province of Quebec as it was established in 1949 when Mr. St. Laurent unilaterally accepted Newfoundland into confederation and recognized, in so doing, the border according to the Canadian Constitution. Probably Mr. Peckford would be well advised to look to the federal government as his friend. He should not stay in bed with Mr. Lévesque all the time.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, first, the minister should not try to deceive the House by saying that Mr. St. Laurent accepted Newfoundland unilaterally in 1949, because he knows that provision was made for Newfoundland's entry into confederation in 1867, and that it was agreed to by the partners at that time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: There was no unilateral action. All the minister has to do is read Section 148 of the British North America Act.

An hon. Member: Read the Constitution.

Mr. McGrath: I notice the clowning Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would ask members to co-operate with the Chair and please ask their questions. We are having too many speeches and lengthy preambles before the questions.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, perhaps it might be easier for us if ministers did not try to mislead the House during question period.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: The minister did mislead the House. However, my question to the minister is this. Is he prepared to state that the boundary established by the terms of union of 1949 shall remain? Just so there is no doubt in anyone's mind, is the minister now prepared—and this will go out as a signal of the position of the Government of Canada to this consortium in Quebec—to say to Newfoundland that you will exercise, as the