

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows we do not possess a nuclear capacity in NATO and have no intention of doing so. The consultations with reference to the neutron bomb have not taken place. I think the hon. member knows as much from the newspaper as I do on the neutron bomb per se.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REVISION OF FORMULA SO AREAS OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT CAN QUALIFY

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In light of announcements last week which indicated that northern British Columbia and northern Alberta had been designated for DREE assistance, and information received in recent weeks concerning some additional \$880 million in DREE funds payable to the province of Quebec, will the minister indicate when he will revise the formula by which areas qualify so that other parts of Canada with high unemployment problems can also benefit from the legislation?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, we did sign these agreements but I would like to correct the figure quoted by the hon. member—some \$800 million in expenditures incurred in Quebec recently. I think that figure is somewhat exaggerated, to say the least. As to the assistance given by my department to other parts of Canada, as far as I know the entire province of Manitoba is designated for receiving our department assistance. We have signed several ancillary agreements with the government of Manitoba that are in effect and other negotiations are being held right now. But concerning the act that allows grants to companies, it is available to the province of Manitoba as a whole.

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[English]

CONFEDERATION

PROPOSED JOINT COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL UNITY— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. In answer to a question by the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi on the possibility of a joint committee, the Prime Minister indicated that his reason for suggesting it was not appropriate was that we were near the end of the session. We hope that is so. Does the Prime Minister recall the commitment made by this party that, notwithstanding the fact that parliament may not be sitting, the members of this party are prepared to participate in such a committee because of the importance of the question of national unity, throughout the summer if necessary, and make a report? Is the Prime Minister concerned about the

Oral Questions

matter because of the unwillingness of members of his own party to dedicate the summer months to this matter or is there some other reason which the Prime Minister chose not to state in his answer to the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, the answer was for the reason I gave. As to people on this side promoting and concerning themselves with national unity, I know from various discussions I have had individually and with caucus that they are intending to do so during the course of the summer. The difference is they do not feel they need a prop from the other side in order to do it.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I have indicated the willingness on our side of the House. The Prime Minister has indicated there is no lack of willingness on the other side of the House. Therefore, I can only conclude that the Prime Minister has decided as a matter of policy to work through a bureaucracy that will report internally with respect to national unity rather than involving all members of this House and the people of Canada on a continuing basis in that debate. If that is his attitude, it is reprehensible and should not be condoned in this country. Is the Prime Minister prepared to examine that attitude, one which I think is dreadful? Is he prepared to give the House a commitment that when we return in the fall the House will have an opportunity of aiding to the extent it can the bureaucracy which has not been established respecting national unity, a bureaucracy which has not been able to find a member to serve on behalf of one very important part of the nation, the province of Quebec? I think that says something. There are a number of members of this House from the province of Quebec who can perhaps make a contribution—

● (1150)

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):—so I suggest the Prime Minister think about that.

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I was a little concerned that the Prime Minister should state that it is the view of the government of Canada that parliament is a prop in looking at the question of national unity. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether it is the policy of the government of Canada that the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada should not be given a formal role to play through a special committee that can make continuing inquiries into the question of national unity and issue a public report. If it is not the policy of the government of Canada to rule out a continuing role for parliament, then why will the Prime Minister not establish a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to inquire on a continuing basis into the problems of national unity?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I believe I gave the answer of the government in my answer to the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi, when I indicated that it was not our view that we