

Oral Questions

interests, or is the government simply going to cross its fingers and hope for the best from the efforts of the United States administration?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that the hon. member's postscript puts him out of order.

Mr. Hellyer: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the hon. member, but it is somewhat irregular for hon. members to take advantage of the situation by asking a question which is clearly out of order and then seeking to ask a supplementary question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I also recognize that the hon. member for Trinity is not the only one who is doing this, so he will, of course, be recognized for his supplementary question.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, I thought the minister might have answered the first part of my question. I direct my supplementary question to the President of the Privy Council. Would he use his good offices to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible date of the Canada-United States parliamentary committee so that members of parliament from all sides of the House can impress upon their U.S. counterparts the stake both countries have in resisting protectionist impulses and working for a greater easing of world trade restrictions?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to use whatever good offices I have, but this is an entirely new jurisdiction that the hon. member has conferred upon me this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Trinity, who has been associated with the group of questions, knows there is a method he may follow to have the subject included on the agenda. His representations and questions have been noted.

[Later:]

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary to the question put by the hon. member for Trinity to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In answer to the question whether or not the government is willing to approach the United States government regarding non-passing of the Burke-Hartke bill, the minister said he hoped it would not pass. Can the government not do any better than hope and pray on an important matter like this? Can they not get the lead out and take some action on this important matter?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Mr. Hellyer.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS**REDISTRIBUTION OF RIDINGS—SUGGESTED ACTION TO PREVENT REDUCTION OF NUMBER IN CERTAIN PROVINCES PENDING FURTHER STUDY**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I directed questions to the Prime Minister concerning the redistribution of seats and a decrease in the number of constituencies from the present number in Newfoundland, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

As provincial commissions are sitting and working on the redistribution to be made, it is necessary to have early action on this matter; otherwise they will have completed their work and any question of amendment of the constitution will be virtually out. I would ask the Prime Minister whether the government has given any consideration to a start in the direction of actually providing, while the whole question is being canvassed at length, that the number of seats in the respective provinces shall not be reduced? Something along that line would enable a full and complete study and would be assured, I believe, of a reasonable degree of support in the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I looked around anxiously to see whether the statement by the right hon. gentleman that such a procedure would get a reasonable amount of support was accurate. I saw our own ranks applauding rather vigorously, but I did not notice too much on the other side.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: You certainly have to coach your applause, Pierre. It doesn't come easy, does it?

Mr. Trudeau: As I indicated the other day in dealing with this question, any solution such as that suggested by the right hon. gentleman might have the effect of either changing the principle of representation by population or have the consequence of a much larger number of members in the House. Let me just say that if a consensus could develop among the various parties along the lines of the suggestion that has been made, or along other lines such as perhaps delaying the application of the present redistribution, this party—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: It would seem, Mr. Speaker, that our suggestion has more support than that of the right hon. gentleman. Both are suggestions that we are prepared to discuss. Let me just ask our House leader to consult the leaders of the other parties to see if such a result can be obtained.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Inertia always has excuses. The right hon. gentleman received applause from those behind him who are generally afraid to support anything that comes from the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!