

Parliament under a very clear mandate passed by statute some years ago.

With respect to the sensitive and obviously difficult situation of acting responsibly and fairly in the period of the referendum, I believe the recent statement last week by the president of the CBC, in Montreal, referred to by the hon. member was indeed a responsible position on his part in an attempt to fulfil the mandate of the CBC to inform Canadians on major issues, of which this obviously is one.

[Translation]

QUEBEC REFERENDUM—INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT POLICY CONCERNING POSITION OF CBC

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, even if the minister intends to sit on the fence, just as the president of the CBC is doing, in order to get an answer I should like to ask the Prime Minister of Canada this question. His information services may have finally told him, among other things, that the CBC intends to stop broadcasting the program *La politique fédérale* during the referendum campaign, but his advisers are not telling him that the Quebec premier is presently broadening the powers of Radio-Québec. I should like to ask the Prime Minister if the position just stated by his minister, namely, to sit back and watch the collapse of the country without doing or saying anything, actually reflects the government's policy.

**An hon. Member:** "Sit on the fence".

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly do not intend to let Canada disappear or be dismembered. We do not intend, either, to reflect on the good reputation of an instrument of national unity, namely, the CBC. Under the circumstances, the difficult role of the CBC is the one indicated by its president, Mr. Johnson. This role has been stated in the past by his predecessor presidents of that Crown corporation. As the minister said, it is a role which we think is wise in the circumstances.

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[English]

#### SHIPBUILDING

PURCHASE OF FERRY FROM EUROPE—REASON NOT BUILT IN CANADA

**Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody):** Mr. Speaker, before I put my question to the Prime Minister, I wonder if I might be permitted time to state, on behalf of my colleagues, that we share with the Prime Minister his regret at the behaviour of Vancouver fans in terms of our national anthem, and to say that as far as I am concerned, a great many of my friends and British Columbians in the Vancouver area support Les Canadiens often over that other eastern team run by that great Canadian patriot, Harold Ballard.

#### Oral Questions

According to reports, the B.C. government intends to purchase a car ferry in Europe to serve on the B.C. coast. Since both employment prospects and balance of payments problems will be endangered, or at least perhaps damaged by such a contract if it were let abroad, I wonder if the Prime Minister can tell us whether the Minister of State (Transport) was expressing government policy the other day when he said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

—I feel very strongly that any ferry to be paid for by Canadian dollars and to be supported by Canadian citizens should be built in Canada.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State (Transport), speaking in this House, expresses government policy.

**Mr. Rose:** A supplementary, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys.

● (1450)

SUBSIDIES PAID TO CLARKE STEAMSHIPS FOR OPERATIONS TO NEWFOUNDLAND

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. I was wondering whether the minister could tell me if his department is considering increasing any of the subsidies paid to Clarke Steamships Ltd. for its shipping operations to Newfoundland.

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in committee this morning, that matter is currently under study.

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#### FINANCE

AMENDING OF MORTGAGE TAX CREDIT PLAN—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the first minister. In light of the byelection results last night, which indicated a substantial rejection of his government's performance over the past six months and which drives home the point—

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

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

**Mr. Axworthy:** —that this is a minority government which must rest on the confidence of this House, is the first minister prepared to have his government accept amendments to the mortgage tax credit plan to provide assistance for the severely damaged rental industry and for those who must renegotiate their mortgages, or will he accept the position put forward by his Minister of Finance in his table-thumping, sword-rattling mugwumpery deliberately designed to provoke an election?

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

**Mr. Axworthy:** Is he prepared to have them brought in?