

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Témiscamingue on a point of order.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, do I not have the right to ask the Prime Minister whether he intends to call an election, if that whole package is not accepted by the 28—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must say to the hon. member that the question seems rather hypothetical to me. I was not exactly of that opinion on one of the questions asked previously, but I definitely am as far as this one is concerned. I do not think that the question asked in those terms is in order. I am prepared to allow the hon. member to rephrase it if he can make it in order.

[English]

After that I will recognize the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings. Order, please. I have suggested to the hon. member for Témiscamingue that he should rephrase the question if he wishes to do so.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, I would have accompanied the right hon. Prime Minister to Victoria, but he did not invite me.

If the provinces reject the whole package—and this is not a hypothetical question—is it, not would it be, but is it the Prime Minister's intention to call a general election?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the hon. member says I did not invite him to Victoria, because I asked the leaders of the three opposition parties. I wonder why he says such a thing when I sent him a written invitation.

Mr. Speaker, in reply to all those hypothetical questions, I would like to explain to the House what is the position of the government. Our position is that the cabinet will examine the provisions of the charter this afternoon.

We are going to decide within the next few days whether we ought to say "yes" or "no" at the Victoria conference and then we shall see. We do not know what the other provinces are going to do, but we are hopeful and I do not see why I should have to consider now what we shall do in case of negative answers.

According to a Portuguese saying, Mr. Speaker, the worst is not always bound to happen.

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question, which could take the form of a point of order or a question of privilege. This way, you will perhaps decide that my question is in order.

The Prime Minister said that he personally invited me to go to Victoria. That is correct, but he invited me to go and face the cameras of the CBC. I was not interested and, so, I did not go there.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order. I feel that if this is—and I hope this is not a conditional "if"—the hon. member's question of privilege, we should now—

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Fairweather: All you were invited to do was to cool your heels outside.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. I recognize the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings on a question. Order, please. I really do not think that is an essential matter which should be considered at this time. The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, in refusing to answer a very important question posed to him by the Leader of the Opposition, gave as the reason for not answering that the question was hypothetical. Is not the real reason for refusing to answer that the government has not thought this matter through—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Hees: —and is therefore hiding behind—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that for the moment we will go to the next subject. The Chair will come back to supplementary questions later, but it seems to me we are getting away from the subject. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Waterloo on another subject.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): I would like to direct my question to the Secretary of State and ask him whether he will seek an early opportunity on motions to make a statement asserting his allegiance to the Liberal party so that the implication that he is a socialist will not reflect unfavourably on those of us who are?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps we should return to supplementary questions on the first subject.

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CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

PROPOSED CHARTER—FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): I should like to address my question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Having regard to the absence of any evidence which might have been presented to the conference on the