

Oral Questions

COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

PURPOSE OF MR. HEAD'S VISITS TO COUNTRIES—
REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE CONFERENCE WILL NOT BE
POSTPONED

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister what purpose his personal envoy, Mr. Head, has in visiting various Commonwealth countries at this time?

• (1510)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Head is attempting to meet as many as possible of the heads of government who plan to attend the Commonwealth Conference to be held next summer in Canada in order to discuss matters of the agenda and various other arrangements with them.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, what particular message was to be conveyed to General M'boto of undistinguished notoriety, the head of Uganda? What was the message to him?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, President M'boto is no longer president of Uganda.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that just indicates one should not accept everything one reads in the newspapers.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I now ask the Prime Minister this: Is Mr. Head carrying a message to these various countries of the possibility of having to postpone the Prime Ministers' conference in Ottawa in August because of an intervening event? Will the Prime Minister give assurance that, regardless of the eventualities of the next few weeks, the conference will be held on the date fixed?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, there is, of course, no guarantee that political events will not intervene between now and the month of August. However, there is no suggestion being made by this government that this should prevent us from going ahead with plans for the conference or, indeed, with plans for the Queen's visit. I would be curious to know whether the right hon. gentleman would support an endeavour to cancel the Queen's visit and the Commonwealth Conference just because there might be some political events that would be distasteful to him and his party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, realizing the tremendous intense affection that the Prime Minister has always evidenced for the Crown—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker:—may I express to him deep appreciation for his change of heart and his conversion. However, I wish to ask him, in the event that an election should take place—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Diefenbaker:—even though the Prime Minister will not occupy that position after the election—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker:—have there been any tentative plans made or has he transmitted such to any of the countries within the Commonwealth that, on the basis of previous experience, an adjournment might be necessary in so far as Canada is concerned?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the question is entirely hypothetical, but I must point out to the right hon. member that the premises on which it is based are just a continuation of the type of innuendo that the right hon. member has been speaking quite often in this matter.

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FISHERIES

PRESENCE OF FOREIGN DRAGGERS WITHIN 12 MILES OF
NEWFOUNDLAND COAST—REQUEST FOR ACTION

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries I wish to direct my question to the Prime Minister. It is prompted by an emergency telephone call I just received. In view of the fact there is evidence of foreign draggers off the northern coast of Newfoundland that are fishing within the 12-mile limit, will the Prime Minister direct that this emergency be corrected and that the Minister of Fisheries be delegated to act at once?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, as I am replacing the Minister of the Environment I will report immediately the hon. member's representation to him.

[English]

Mr. Marshall: In view of the fact the patrol vessels of the Department of Fisheries are ineffective in this emergency, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of National Defence.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marshall: Will the minister take note of this emergency and direct the air-sea rescue squadron to look into this dangerous activity by foreign draggers?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I will consult with my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. Is the government prepared to give consideration to supplementing the inadequate fisheries patrol fleet by Canadian naval vessels to protect Canadian nationals fishing in Canadian waters?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!