

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member set out to accomplish an impossible task, but he succeeded.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**SUGGESTED JOINT MEETING OF DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the hon. member for Restigouche-Madawaska I would like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs as acting chairman of the standing committee on external affairs. Would the minister use his good offices to arrange a joint meeting of the defence and external affairs committee so that a number of matters affecting armed services unification can be more properly and more carefully examined?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I think I dealt effectively with that matter yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: In view of that answer I would like to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that a few moments ago the Prime Minister indicated he was an expert on unification, I wonder if he might use his good offices to try to arrange such a joint meeting.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): I could not possibly be more effective than my hon. friend the minister.

INDUSTRY**CAPE BRETON ISLAND—STATEMENTS RESPECTING ASSISTANCE TO MINERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the remarks made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in dealing with the auto pact and the problems in the automobile industry, will he advise his ministers that when they make statements outside the house, respecting matters not concerning their own departments, they will be expected to give me the same privilege they have been allowed here in this house with respect to answers.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): On a point of privilege—

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Mr. Herridge.]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a point of privilege—

Mr. Starr: Can't you see the Speaker is on his feet?

Mr. Speaker: I believe the Secretary of State for External Affairs rose first on a question of privilege, and I think I should hear him first.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My point of privilege is this, Mr. Speaker. A member of the government also has obligations to his constituents, and I want my hon. friend to know that I regard the interests of the automobile workers in my constituency as part of my obligations as a member of this house. What I have said in no way conflicts with my obligations as a minister of the crown, notwithstanding the observation understandably and so willingly made by the Leader of the Opposition just now.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Better turn around and correct the Minister of Industry.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I would direct the attention of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to the fact that when similar questions were asked of the Minister of National Health and Welfare dealing with coal miners in Nova Scotia, of whom there are some in his own constituency, answers were absolutely refused by that minister, and there is a definite contradiction between what the Secretary of State for External Affairs says now and what his colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare did and what this house has ruled in the past. The Secretary of State for External Affairs is not only contradicting his colleague but he is contradicting the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I have a question of privilege too. Why is the minister rising on a question directed to the Prime Minister?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member resume his seat? The hon. member asked a question. That was not a question of privilege and, having asked his question, the Secretary of State for External Affairs rose on a question of privilege—

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): On a point of order, what right has he to rise and answer a question I directed to the Prime Minister?