

Oral Questions

Mr. Clark: The Prime Minister made reference exclusively, when he talked about a delay in the application of that principle which he has just enunciated, to problems relating to facilities. Yesterday in this House the Secretary of State added another reason for a potential delay. Excuse me for a moment. I should like to be courteous to the Secretary of State by citing him precisely, but I cannot find that exact reference. However, the reference was that the delay in the province of Quebec of the application of that principle was due to the sense of insecurity of French-speaking Canadians relative to the future of their language. Will the Prime Minister clarify for the House as to whether there will be delays in the application of the principle, which he has enunciated, in the province of Quebec for that reason?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is absolutely right. The principle is absolute, but in the administrative application of it there will be some cause for delay in various parts of the country for various reasons. The paper states quite clearly in the case of the province of Quebec that the present government of Quebec has evoked the principle of insecurity of the French-speaking society in Canada, particularly in that province.

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition looks at the white paper, he will see words to the effect that this opinion on the insecurity is not shared by all and is debatable. Indeed I think it is a debatable question. Further facts and figures will be brought to light which show the justification for the delay evoked by some Quebec authorities and will show that perhaps they are not as great statistically as they claim. Those who govern the province today are afraid of this problem of insecurity. That is why there is some provision in the white paper for delay, if it is justifiable, as it has to be in the province of Ontario and other provinces and as it might be in the province of Quebec. With the principle being there, we will make sure no false excuses are brought by anyone, at least to qualify the principles we put forward.

● (1450)

Mr. Clark: The precise language of the Secretary of State yesterday was:

We understand therefore that in that context—

The context of insecurity.

—it may be regrettably necessary not to persist now with the immediate implementation of that principle of free choice for the education of one's children in either official language.

That is the end of the quotation. The minister was speaking of Quebec. Can the Prime Minister, in light of his answer and of that of the Secretary of State yesterday, tell us what timeframe he is thinking of, when, in his view, it might be possible to persist with the immediate implementation of the principle of free choice?

Mr. Trudeau: It is indeed difficult to give a particular timeframe because so much depends on the actions of the provinces in this instance. As in the first example I gave, I suppose it would be the time necessary to build schools and to

[Mr. Clark.]

provide the kind of education to French speaking Canadians in the other provinces that English speaking Canadians in Quebec have enjoyed for the past 150 years. So this catch-up in the other provinces depends a great deal on the will of those provinces to provide this degree of fairness and equal treatment.

In the province of Quebec, the timeframe depends very much on the psychology of those who feel themselves threatened. I, for one, do not think that the majority of Quebecers feel threatened with extinction.

Mr. Fraser: Your paper says they do.

Mr. Trudeau: If the hon. member reads the paper, which I ask him to do—

Mr. Fraser: Which I did.

Mr. Trudeau: —he would understand what we are talking about, but once again he is following some other alley.

An hon. Member: You are talking from the other side of your mouth.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

BREAK-IN AT L'AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY BY MR. JUSTICE HALL

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, with your permission I had intended to address my question to the Solicitor General, but the Prime Minister is in such good form that perhaps he might like to answer the question. I understand that the Solicitor General has received a telegram from the former Supreme Court justice, Mr. Emmet Hall, on behalf of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union urging a full scale public inquiry into what the telegram describes as the break-in and the apparent case of cover-up by the RCMP. It says that such an inquiry is necessary to relieve pressure on the RCMP and to regain public respect for the laws of this country. I ask the Prime Minister and/or the Solicitor General whether, in light of the views of such an eminent jurist and legal authority as Mr. Justice Hall, if they are not impressed by our arguments, they would not be impressed by the request that he has made and change their minds.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Justice Hall is indeed a very respectable and eminent authority in this field. Naturally, I will take note of whatever representations he has made.

An hon. Member: You won't do a thing.

Mr. Trudeau: I am not quite sure exactly what his opinions are, but if he wants to see an over-all investigation of the RCMP, I feel that that might be a repetition of what was done several years ago by a commission of inquiry which recom-