

When the investigation is finished and I am prepared to speak in this House, I will do so.

CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In his book, "Federalism and the French Canadians", on page 24 it is stated, and I quote:

It would certainly be an advantage if the federal government consulted the provinces about matters that affect them, even if these matters are entirely within federal jurisdiction. I do not see why we could not establish permanent consulting bodies to ensure that our trade, tariff, customs or monetary policies really reflect the opinions of people throughout the country, and that no province feels undermined by the exercise of central power.

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows he should not make such lengthy quotations and should go directly to his question.

Mr. Stewart: Madam Speaker, I was only trying to give the Prime Minister a chance to answer. My question to the Prime Minister is, in view of the statement which he made on page 36 of that book, and I quote:

I should be very surprised if real statesmen, given the facts of the problem, arrived at the conclusion that our Constitution needs drastic revision.

—would the Prime Minister explain his drastic change of mind on the Constitution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to something I wrote some 15 or 20 years ago, I am not sure if his question meets the rule of urgent and pressing necessity. I do not think it does.

Mr. Stewart: Madam Speaker, at the rear of this book it says a question was asked if the Prime Minister would like to revise his statements in 1977, and he said no. The last time I asked the right hon. leader of the Grits a question he accused me of being a backbencher who spreads falsehoods. I would just like to say that I think the Canadian people now know who spreads falsehoods. On page 37—

Madam Speaker: Order. It looks as though the hon. member wishes to read the entire book to us. Would he ask the question?

Mr. Stewart: May I ask the Prime Minister, in his monumental flip-flop of "and so I cannot help condemning—

Madam Speaker: Order. Even if I smile sometimes it does not mean I want to be facetious. I am serious. I would like the hon. member to ask his question right away.

Mr. Stewart: Madam Speaker, I am trying to ask the question but it pertains to the quote. May I just read a short quote? The quote is from the Prime Minister's book, Madam Speaker, and is as follows:

And so I cannot help condemning as irresponsible those people who wish our nation to invest undetermined amounts of money, time, and energy in a constitutional adventure that they have been unable to define precisely but which

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would consist in more or less completely destroying confederation to replace it with some vague form of sovereignty.

What kind of sovereignty?

An hon. Member: He was smarter in those days.

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I only hope those who could not quite understand the quote will buy the book and read it. The part I heard had to do with consulting the provinces and making sure that the central government was involving the provinces in discussions of policies which affected them. It seems to me that is what this government has been doing, and what the government which preceded it was doing. If we consider the matter of the Constitution, I do not think anybody would deny that between June of last year and September there were endless hours of consultation done on behalf of the federal government by the Minister of Justice.

With regard to the matter of monetary policy, I just have to remind the hon. member that early in the seventies we began the practice of having quarterly meetings of finance ministers so that we could discuss with them budgetary framework and hear their views on how monetary and other policies should be developed. On the question of trade, of course, the provinces were very directly involved in consultation while we were discussing at the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade negotiations in Geneva. In every example I have been able to hear from the hon. member there have been very extensive consultations. I think if we read the book we will find other examples.

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● (1440)

TRADE

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO EXPORTATION OF COAL FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA TO JAPAN

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday Senator Olson committed the Government of Canada to spending some \$450 million on a development for the export of coal from northeastern British Columbia. It was also revealed by Stuart Leggatt, a member of the British Columbia legislature, that a B.C. cabinet internal economic planning group had recommended a six-month delay in the project and cautioned that going ahead at this point would be hazardous. Is the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources aware of these documents and is he, to use the words of Senator Olson in Vancouver yesterday, still happy with this deal?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, obviously we on this side of the House do not have access to the cabinet documents of the government of Alberta, but I certainly would be very happy to see a copy.

Mr. Andre: This is British Columbia.