

Oral Questions

CORRECTION OF INJUSTICES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said, and I believe I heard him correctly, that he was interested in having justice in our time. I agree with that, and that is why we stood up in this House to make sure that justice was restored to Franco-Manitobans, even if it was taken away in 1890. That is why we stood up in this House and fought for constitutional rights for native Canadians, even if they were denied in the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I ask the Prime Minister if it is right to redress past wrongs for living Franco-Manitobans, if it is right to redress past wrongs inflicted upon native Canadians, because those native Canadians are still living today, why is it not right to redress the past wrongs of living Japanese Canadians today?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member gives an interesting example. He is going to redress the past wrongs of Franco-Manitobans. I would like to know how he is going to operate that redress. Since 1890, as he correctly points out, they have been suffering injustice because they have been legislated in a language by laws which were *ultra vires* because, according to the Supreme Court in 1979, the laws passed since then were *ultra vires*. I would like to hear the Hon. Member say how he is going to redress that.

Mr. Lalonde: And compensation.

Mr. Trudeau: And how he would compensate for that suffering and how he would also deal—he talks of the Japanese—with Chinese Canadians, of whom we heard not so long ago, who were asked to pay head taxes to get into the country, and who were certainly treated in a way which was not compatible with equal justice to everyone.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I hear the heckling back there, Mr. Speaker. I think the Leader of the New Democratic Party can think for himself. He does not need the backbenchers to give him the next answers.

Mr. Regan: I do not know about that.

Mr. Trudeau: There may be some doubt about that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I am just trying to state the principle.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Order.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Clark is disturbed again. I will sit down.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1440)

Mr. Broadbent: The Prime Minister has dropped from being merely disagreeable to being somewhat pathetic, and I say that directly to him.

METHOD OF REDRESS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that we tried to redress past injustices to Franco-Manitobans by bringing forward a Constitution in the House, in which some of us believed, to make sure those rights would be entrenched. That is the way we dealt with that. There is a different way now to deal with the rights of Japanese Canadians, that is, to provide some compensation through financial measures here in the House.

Does the Prime Minister not see that there is a connection between Franco-Manitoban rights, if those Franco-Manitoban rights were destroyed in the past but had to be restored in the present for the living, and the rights of native Canadians which were denied in the past but were restored for the present and for the future? If he agrees, does he not also agree the Japanese Canadians who had their rights denied, who were cruelly and inhumanely treated in the past, ought in the name of simple justice have those grievances dealt with in a straightforward and compassionate way by the House of Commons?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member makes a parallel, and I suggest he is then departing from it himself. He says that Franco-Manitobans were unjustly treated and we brought in redress in the House with a Bill of Rights and with resolutions before the House. He does not talk of compensation. He talks of making sure in the future—and God help us that we succeed—that they will not be treated unjustly. In an exact parallel we did the same thing with the Japanese Canadians. They were unjustly treated in the past. This Party brought in a Bill of Rights to ensure that there would be no more of that kind of discrimination in the future.

The parallel is perfect, but when we get to the financial compensation—and I take it he is talking about financial compensation, not apologies, because there have been apologies which I made personally on behalf of the Government of Canada—let him, perhaps not today but maybe by way of correspondence, tell me how much he thinks we should compensate not only the Japanese but the Chinese who have been unjustly treated, other Canadians who suffered from immigration practices, and let us go back as far as the Acadians. Then we will see if it is a reasonable request that he stands up in the House and tries to increase his favour with a particular lobby in the country, as the Leader of the Conservatives was doing at the beginning of this Question Period, by standing up for one group. The Government has to govern for all of Canada; it has to take everything into account.