

*Oral Questions*

The Leader of the Opposition says I would have put what I wanted on the agenda. He knows that we did put the charter on the agenda and that it was debated most of the summer. This was on the agenda. No, not this charter; a charter which was considerably weakened in negotiations with the premiers and which has since been strengthened by participation of hon. members of the House of Commons.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trudeau:** The Leader of the Opposition knows that the premiers then refused the charter, refused even to discuss it until they got more rights for themselves, either over the fisheries or over other matters. He also knows that they met here last week and that they made it quite clear that they were not including the charter in their negotiations; that they wanted to discuss an amending formula, but they did not want to discuss a charter. Even the amending formula they did not want to discuss now, but some time later.

What we have to lose is an agreement by all sides of this House to proceed with this matter and a schedule which we all negotiated and agreed to together, so that hopefully we can get on to other subjects rather than continue—as the Leader of the Opposition, I believe, suggests—for another two years of negotiations on the Constitution, where we would then see if the provinces agree to a charter. We know they do not agree to a charter. That is why this House is so determined on seeing the charter included in the resolution.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** First of all, the Prime Minister does not know what the premiers are prepared to agree to. He cannot know until he sits down—

**Some hon. Members:** Ha, ha!

**Mr. Clark:** No; they laugh!

The Prime Minister may have some view in his own mind, but it is now only that, and he has not given the Canadian process the opportunity to work out an agreement in a Canadian way.

A moment ago the Prime Minister said that last week or a few days ago he was prepared to meet with the premiers. Why is he not prepared to meet with them now? Why will he not take advantage, or the opportunity as it exists in the country, to sit down and try to get agreement among the first ministers, that, if it were found, could be brought back to this House of Commons so this House of Commons would deal with the matter that was the product of Canadian agreement rather than the product of a unilateral determination by one man leading one Liberal government?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trudeau:** Madam Speaker, I was prepared to meet the premiers last week; I was prepared to meet them yesterday and the day before. I would be prepared to meet them next month, and next summer, and next fall, and next winter, if they want.

The resolution before the House, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, provides for such meetings when we can exchange views on a better amending formula, if that is the subject they want to discuss, or on improving a charter, if that is what they want to discuss. I have even made the point very clearly that the resolution before the House permits the charter of rights to be done away with if that is what the premiers want; and if that is what the Leader of the Opposition wants to say is a position of his party, this is possible. We will have an amending formula which will permit us to do away with the charter.

All I am saying is that at some point hon. members of this House must make up their minds. We have been waiting for the premiers—I will not say for 54 years; I think I can say, in fairness, about ten months—to say what their position was.

The Leader of the Opposition challenges me to say whether I know what is on their minds. They have said what is on their minds. Premier Lyon, for instance, made it quite clear that he was against the charter. Premier Lévesque made it quite clear that he did not want entrenchment of educational rights for minority groups. These were made quite clear. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to espouse those causes, let him make that quite clear, too. Then we will have a debate in this House.

However, I think the Leader of the Opposition, like the premiers, is only intent on one thing. It is to procrastinate, because he cannot make up his mind.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** I guess the real question is what you are afraid of.

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#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE POSSIBLE USE IN EVENT OF STRIKES

**Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General, if he will stay in his seat. Can the minister advise the House whether he authorized RCMP Chief Superintendent Fagan to promise the RCMP as strikebreakers within one hour of a police municipal strike in Halifax, even though such a strike would not involve 40 per cent of the municipal police officers in Halifax, and furthermore, can the minister advise the House whether he intends to make it a policy of the RCMP to act as strikebreakers in the event of a legally constituent police—

**An hon. Member:** Constituted.

**Mr. Parker:**—constituted police strike?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Well, Madam Speaker, the hon. member has it all wrong. We have a series of agreements with the provinces pursuant to which the RCMP are provided as a provincial police service. These agreements have expired; but I have indicated to the provinces that so long as bona fide negotiations continue, those contracts will contin-