

Oral Questions

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I recently met with representatives of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association to discuss with them the work they have done. I have also met with representatives of the Business Council on national issues. They put forward some very useful and constructive ideas on improving our efforts to assist research and development.

An hon. Member: When?

Mr. Gray: I am working actively on this matter with the Minister of Finance. But, as the hon. member has said, these are incentive measures which relate to a budget and they are matters of tax policy. I hope we will be able to proceed on them very soon.

Mr. Gilchrist: Madam Speaker, those are the kinds of measures I am talking about, submitted by responsible agencies such as the CMA. Because research and development is the most important factor in Canada's future industrial and economic development, even more important than oil exploration or movie-making, when will the minister implement the personal income tax legislation for research and development investments as that which exists for film-making?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I do not want to treat a serious question facetiously. I could say that I will implement those changes if and when I ever become minister of finance.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: John Evans just fainted.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

● (1430)

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I am happy to say—and I think everybody agrees—that we have an outstanding Minister of Finance now, and he is treating the subject very seriously. I am working with him to get the kind of further action the hon. member is talking about, but about which his government did nothing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE CONSTITUTION

DISCUSSIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I note that the Prime Minister will be going to London and having talks with Her Majesty the Queen and with the British prime minister. According to government sources, he will be talking about the constitution. I wonder whether he can confirm this to the House. I am talking about the report this morning that the Prime Minister will be talking to Her Majesty the Queen and the British prime minister about the constitution. Can he

confirm that? If he will be having talks about the constitution, can he tell the House some of the details of those talks?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, there is no agenda set, that I know, which might include constitutional talks. With regard to the meeting with Her Majesty, it is usual with Her Majesty, as the Queen of Canada, to inform herself of how things are going in Canada in various areas, in Parliament and with respect to the constitution. I will inform her that we are meeting, the ten provinces and the federal government, and that we hope to carry out our pledge to bring in a new, renewed form of federalism in the very near future. Patriation, as the hon. member knows, is one of the subjects that the Minister of Justice and the other provincial ministers are discussing. Naturally, that would involve the British Parliament.

Turning to the hon. member's second question, I have no specific plan to discuss this with Mrs. Thatcher, the British prime minister. It is possible it will arise. If it does, I hope we will have the support of both sides of this House to end the situation where Canadian affairs must be cleared through the prime minister of another country, and that we will bring back the constitution once and for all. I will explain, of course, to anyone who wants to hear about it, that we hope on this side of the House—and, hopefully, on the other side—that we will get the consent of all provinces to assist the federal government in making this final step—I repeat—to put an end to a situation where Canada cannot amend its own constitution without getting permission from the British Parliament, something that should have been ended a long time ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nystrom: Will the Prime Minister be making a proposal to the Queen or to the British prime minister about patriation? If so, what will that proposal be? Also, can he assure the House that he will not raise the possibility of any unilateral action while the negotiating process is under way? In other words, will he give that process a fair chance to work itself out, so that we can have a consensus of the provinces as well as the federal government before there is any patriation?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, if the hon. member is seeking reassurance from me—which I gave in my previous answer—that we will seek agreement among all provinces, certainly if asked I will say that that is the federal government's intention. I understand that even the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the members of that party supported a motion presented in this House by the hon. member for Edmonton East that we should get on with the process of patriation. I hope the NDP is not backing down from that commitment.