

Inquiries of the Ministry

immigrants to Canada from all Commonwealth countries who presently enjoy them?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would have to look at what the Secretary of State said. I am not aware of the statement. I do not know exactly what he said. I would be prepared to look at it and decide whether it is government policy or not.

Mr. Dinsdale: As a supplementary question, inasmuch as some of these privileges are reciprocal and are offered by other Commonwealth countries, would the Prime Minister, in the course of his examination of this matter, consider the advisability of placing it on the agenda of the next Commonwealth conference with a view to abolishing these reciprocal arrangements?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the agenda of the next Commonwealth conference, to take place in London in January, has already been set after a great deal of consultation with all the attending members. It probably would be too late at this date to add another item. However, I could only answer this question after having seen what the Secretary of State really said, and even then it would perhaps not give rise to putting it on the agenda in some future year. I do not really know.

[Translation]

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. Could the right hon. Prime Minister assure the house that if privileges are—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The member for Trois-Rivières is rising on a question of privilege.

[English]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member for Brandon-Souris to tell the house when and where the Secretary of State mentioned what he was just talking about?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I doubt if that is a question of privilege. It is a very simple question, but the hon. member cannot ask it at this time.

Mr. Baldwin: The hon. member for Brandon-Souris isn't on the roster today, so he cannot answer questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

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Can he assure us that he will ask the Secretary of State to grant immigrants of French origin the same privileges enjoyed by immigrants from the British Commonwealth?

Mr. Trudeau: In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is going in a direction quite contrary to that of one of his party colleagues. The question is not to take away privileges from the British or to give some to the French but rather to put all Canadians on an equal footing.

Therefore, I think that it is to that end that we should work rather than trying to extend privileges to a few preferred groups; whether they are of British or French origin, we should put all Canadians on an equal footing.

As the hon. member knows, there are still a few discriminations. The government of which I am honored to be a member abolished last year a large number of discriminations against those who have acquired Canadian citizenship, but some voting privileges still exist in the case of British subjects.

[English]

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): With regard to the same question and with reference to the remarks allegedly made, may I ask the right hon. gentleman whether all ministers of the crown are free to express personal opinions on matters of government policy, or whether this privilege is reserved only for the Prime Minister's cronies.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, this question is supplementary to the question asked by the hon. member for Charlevoix. Inasmuch as the Prime Minister's additional statement on this matter indicates that the government is advanced in its thinking and policy making, could the Prime Minister give the house some indication of when the white paper on citizenship will be presented to the house so we can all share in these matters?

Mr. Trudeau: I believe the question might be asked of the Secretary of State. I am not aware of the timing on this.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH SERVICES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the announcement by the Minister of National Health and Welfare that