

Oral Questions

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the answer to that is an unequivocal no. I do not know what will be in the budget on Thursday night.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MAKE STATEMENT ON MOTIONS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, I would remind the minister that in his earlier answer he referred to suggestions as to what should be done Thursday or Friday. There is no way the minister can justify selective secrecy. Every Canadian who is renewing a mortgage is entitled to that advice. Now that the budget secrecy has broken down, will the minister make a statement on motions and clear the air for all Canadians renewing their mortgages?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I have already indicated that, as the minister reporting to this House for Canada Mortgage and Housing, I do not know of the contents of the budget affecting housing. I have indicated, and I say unequivocally, that I have specifically instructed my officials to make no reference to the budget or to hold out promise that there will be assistance in that budget.

• (1430)

What I have said is that with the discussions in this House and in this country since interest rates went to 20 per cent, I have given advice to the government, and I have said that it would be prudent for anyone who is facing a very difficult situation to wait and see, indeed, if there is any assistance, or any reference or any discussion in the budget.

REPLIES FOR HOME OWNERS

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, it boggles the mind how the minister of housing can refute what he said in his first answer. Would the minister of housing please give this House a straight answer concerning his request. The minister of housing asked me some ten days ago to supply him with a list of names. I brought them into the House of Commons, Madam Speaker, on November 2. I hand delivered them to the minister, and I tabled them in this House.

As of twelve noon today, the minister has not corresponded, nor phoned, nor has any official in his office communicated with any of the 32 people who are losing their homes. How do you get on the preferred list? Does the minister intend to leak out budget information secretly to a privileged few, and stand idly by while thousands of Canadians are losing their homes on the false promise of the minister of housing?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, as a matter of practice, each day when I come into this House I ask for an update from officials of my ministry, who have been responding to letters received from members of the House on all sides, to advise me of the letters that have

been received and of the action taken. So far as I know, all letters that have been received by my ministry have been acted upon, and letters have gone forward as of twelve o'clock noon today.

QUERY RESPECTING MINISTER'S ACTIONS

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Obviously the minister of housing does not even know what he says in this House of Commons, let alone what his officials say. On the front page of the Peterborough *Examiner*, there is "Warsaw man faces a mortgage crisis—loses his home." Why has the minister not contacted that man in Warsaw, Ontario, who was one of the 32 names tabled in this House, Madam Speaker, on November 2? I should like to know if the minister will stand idly by while CMHC offers bombs like AHOP, and balloon payments on grants and subsidies that are compounded onto the end? Will the minister be as bad as the banks? Will the minister balloon those payments at 19½ per cent through CMHC while he sits by, does not return the calls and does not correspond with the people? This House deserves an answer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): In responding to the hon. member's question, I would be repeating myself in saying that I have been advised by the officials who have handled these cases on an individual basis that all cases have been responded to, and that all members have been acknowledged, and that all people—

Mr. Nielsen: They have not.

Mr. Cosgrove:—who have made enquiries have been contacted by telephone by the people in CMHC who have been handling these calls. If the case to which the hon. member refers has not, then given the specifics I will look into that later this afternoon.

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THE CONSTITUTION

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER COMMUNICATE BY LETTER WITH PROVINCIAL PREMIERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. He knows that all parties in the House of Commons were committed to the entrenchment of aboriginal and treaty rights as expressed in Clause 34 of the original constitutional proposition. Since the Minister of Justice just yesterday reiterated the federal government's commitment to entrenchment, I should like to ask the Prime Minister the following question. As an expression of continuing non-partisan concern with this issue, and in view of the seriousness of it for the native people of Canada, would the Prime Minister agree that it would be an important step for a letter to be sent, signed by the Prime Minister and the leaders of the other opposition parties in the House of Commons, to

each of the premiers in Canada requesting that they commit themselves to Clause 34?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member says that all parties in the House of Commons agree that that should be in. I am not quite certain that has been the case over the past year. I wonder why the hon. member would want me to write that letter only on behalf of the aboriginals and not on behalf of all other Canadians who do not have the equality clause and legality clause entrenched, that are subject to "notwithstanding." Yesterday we heard about women's rights, and I am sure we will hear about the disabled and so on.

I am trying to get the hon. member to understand that there was an accord last Thursday. It left some things out that we did not like left out. It put some things in that the provinces did not want put in. It was a compromise. I think it should be the task of this House, if it wants to act on that accord, not to try to renegotiate that accord after the fact. I do not mind going on record as saying that we would still stand by all the rights that were in the charter as they were when we first put them in.

Mr. Hawkes: They weren't in the first one.

Mr. Trudeau: Some bellyacher over there says it wasn't in. Madam Speaker, we thought we had put them in. The aboriginals must have thought they were in because they want to go back to what was in.

Mr. Clark: They were not in the first one; you know it.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to say something. Could you recognize him next, Madam Speaker?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I hope the Leader of the New Democratic Party will take from my answer not that I am unsympathetic to his request but that I find it perilous indeed to try to reopen the accord of last Thursday piecemeal and to try, each of us, to put something back in that was in in the first place and that was taken out as a result of an agreement hammered out with the difficulties he knows about.

POSITION ADOPTED BY PREMIERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I would be prepared at this point not to question the motives of the Prime Minister in this issue if he would be prepared to agree that the comparison he tried to make between women's rights and other rights and aboriginal and treaty rights is a bad comparison, precisely because aboriginal and treaty rights have been dropped completely from the accord that was reached between the federal government and the provinces. That is not the case for other rights to which he alluded.

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Since the governments of Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan are publicly on record in favour of the entrenchment as expressed in Clause 34, does the Prime Minister not think it would be useful, on this important question, simply to write the other premiers to get their views and, if they are opposed to the entrenchment, is it not important for the people of Canada to know which provincial premiers are opposed to that idea?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The hon. member says that he won't question my motives for the time being, Madam Speaker. Let me say that I won't question his for the time being.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I assume the hon. member would like a Canadian constitution with an entrenched charter, though not the best one in the world that we had when some of his members and mine wanted to see this thing proceeded with.

We never knew how many hon. members because I don't think they knew themselves how many, Madam Speaker. It seemed to be a changing date.

The hon. member says that aboriginal rights are in a different category from women's rights. I point out to him that it was his own member from, I believe, New Westminster, who asked the first question about that, and who was indignant because somehow women's rights have been somewhat diminished. I am telling him that if we want to reopen the accord for the natives, then why not reopen it for other things too, and isn't that the surest way of destroying the accord?

He quotes, I believe, three provinces that say they are in favour, Madam Speaker, I think it is on record that we were in favour as well. It is still in the resolution which is before the House, that clause, which if my memory is correct, the Indians were campaigning violently against even in London and throughout Europe. That clause was in there and now they want it back. It was in the government's resolution. If he wants to put another government on record he can put our name. But I do not think he should be asking me who was the author of that particular deletion.

● (1446)

If the hon. member is asking for individual provinces I can tell him that seven provinces, in the night from Wednesday to Thursday, put together a final compromise solution. They put it to us. We were already into the fourth day. We had already lost two premiers; a third was packing his bags.

We had to decide whether we would proceed unilaterally, as the saying goes, to the United Kingdom, with the Charter in all its purity, or whether we would make some compromise to get nine provinces on side. We made the compromise. I thought that it was also the desire of the Leader of the New Democratic Party because, in the days preceding that meeting, he was urging us to have a meeting and to seek a compromise. If he

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didn't want some changes, he should not have urged us to seek a compromise.

We negotiated the best compromise we could. Certainly it was considerably better than the compromise put forward on Tuesday where the only entrenched thing was democratic rights and linguistic equality at the federal level. Everything else, including native rights, equality rights, legal rights, mobility rights and linguistic rights, was to be sent off to a commission for two years; that was the proposal on Tuesday. On Thursday I think we got considerably better. But if the hon. member didn't want a compromise, he shouldn't have urged me to seek one.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER SEEK SUPPORT OF PREMIERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, regrettably we are back to the old polemic style in dealing with this issue. This party wanted some consensus; the Prime Minister is right. But we also recognize that there is a profound distinction to be made in that document between women's and other rights which are still in there in some form, and aboriginal and treaty rights which have been removed completely. There is a distinction I wish the Prime Minister would acknowledge.

What is to be lost in his writing the other premiers to ask them, because it was in a document that he said he received? I happen to know that some of the people who were supporters of that document would include entrenchment. What is to be lost by the Prime Minister writing those premiers a straightforward letter now, or soon, to ask if they would support the re-inclusion of Clause 34?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member said that there was a profound distinction between these rights and the others. I wish he had told me when I asked him before meeting with the premiers, when I said, "Look, Ed, what do you think we should give up; what do you think we should drop?"

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: That is what I asked him. Let him try to remember the answer he gave me. Don't look puzzled, my friend; don't look puzzled.

Mr. Hees: What was it, Pierre?

Mr. Trudeau: We were being urged to seek an agreement, by everybody, including the hon. members' party. We fought for four days to keep our charter as it was. The choice then was, and it is now, of forgetting about the accord of last Thursday and moving unilaterally. If I have the entire support of the hon. member's party, and of the province of Saskatchewan, and of a couple of other provinces, we will revert to that. We will destroy the accord of last Thursday and we will proceed with it, if I can have that.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Oh, oh! Now hon. members don't want me to protect women's rights or native rights.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame!

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHATHAM, N.B.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. In light of the minister's remarks in Chatham, New Brunswick, last Saturday, and last night's distressing report on the CBC national news, including the negative and counter-productive statements of the crepe-hanging mayor of the town of Chatham that the base will close, will the minister state whether or not there are plans within his department vis-à-vis CFB Chatham about which we have not been informed?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, it is very unfortunate sometimes that newscasts do not reflect the whole reality. It is true that I was in Chatham to address its Chamber of Commerce, I told the people of Chatham and of the Miramichi region that they should plan for a change because we were phasing out our 416 squadron of Voodoos, of F-101 fighters.

We know the consequences this will have on the region. However, I told them as well that this was supposed to happen in 1982, and we gave them further leeway of two more years to do it. I think they understood very well. We told them too that we were establishing an interdepartmental committee so that we could see altogether what we could do to alleviate the consequences of these squadrons leaving the Chatham base. I think some people understood very well. I have information to the effect that the Premier of New Brunswick, Mr. Hatfield, called Mr. MacMillan of the Miramichi Region Development Corporation, to tell him that he would give him all the help possible. If Madam Speaker would allow me, I would like to read one sentence of the communication from Mr. Ernest MacMillan as follows:

Thank you for coming to Miramichi to place your department's position regarding CFB Chatham before the public.

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Lamontagne: It is very important that everyone in the House understands the way the government is handling a case for which we have much concern.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lamontagne: I thank Madam Speaker for her indulgence. It reads:

We at the Miramichi Region Development Corporation accept your challenge to plan for change... We are pleased that you do not plan to abandon CFB