

Oral Questions

until I have at least had a chance to hear what the Indian leaders of this country say about the matter. I will be in a better position to answer questions of the type which the hon. member has just put in a couple of weeks, after I have had an opportunity to assess the feelings of the conference.

● (1420)

Mr. Schellenberger: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The minister and previous ministers have conducted a number of studies that were to assist in the revision of the Indian Act. All those studies are now in the hands of the minister.

Is it his intention to discuss those studies with the Indian people at this conference, or what impact will they have and what part will they play in the revision of the Indian Act?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): As I say, Madam Speaker, if one looks at the agenda, they are going into this question thoroughly. They have asked me to watch their deliberations. After the Prime Minister speaks to them tonight, they have asked me to speak to them on Thursday and respond to some of their suggestions.

I hope to be in a position then to indicate in some concrete fashion the direction in which I think we can proceed with their backing, but I will do so only in the most general terms at that early stage.

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THE CONSTITUTION**NEGOTIATION ON COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister: it is on the constitution as it pertains to the aboriginal people of this country.

I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he is prepared to negotiate with Canada's aboriginal people the entrenchment of certain collective rights for them in any new Canadian constitution.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the question is too general for me to do it justice in this particular forum. If the hon. member would indicate what he means by collective rights, we might have a little discussion about them.

Mr. Nystrom: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker: Is the Prime Minister willing to negotiate with these people the entrenchment in our constitution of certain collective rights? Those rights could be defined in future negotiations between the Indian people of this country and the federal government and perhaps the provinces.

In principle, is the Prime Minister in agreement with the entrenchment of certain collective rights for the Indian nations of this country in a new Canadian constitution?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I apologize to the hon. member, but I repeat: if he is asking me a theoretical question without indicating what he has in mind—

Mr. Nystrom: Will you negotiate?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: There seems to be a bit of worry over there. The position I have always taken on these discussions—but I realize it is perhaps not the forum to do it—is that there are very few collective rights which cannot be protected by reducing them to individual rights. I should like to know more from the hon. member about what he has in mind.

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NORTHERN PIPELINES**MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—SETTLEMENT OF DENE LAND CLAIMS**

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and also pertains to specific rights. In 1977, Mr. Justice Berger of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry called for a moratorium on major development in the north until native claims had been settled.

On March 24, 1980, application was made to the NEB for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the building of a \$360 million, 12-inch, 560-mile oil pipeline from Norman Wells to Zama, Alberta.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Manly: Application was made—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Manly: My question is, considering the government's recent initiatives to reopen claims negotiations with the Dene people, will the minister endeavour to persuade his cabinet colleagues to instruct all government agencies involved in the decision on this pipeline to postpone any action until Dene claims have been settled in a manner that is satisfactory to the Dene people?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I believe I shall be seeing the leadership of the Dene during the course of this week, and we will be discussing that matter. We are responding to their desire to have the land claims question to which the hon. member referred settled as quickly as possible.

Discussions have indicated that we might be able to find an acceptable solution so that all development is not frozen in the meantime. I wanted the involvement of the Dene in the type of solution that I am hopeful we can arrive at.