

Oral Questions

The report on Indian self-government said that one of the most distressing problems noted by the committee was the problem faced by bands like the Lubicon band and the Conne River band, which have no land base, and urged immediate action to give them a land base. Considering the threat to their traditional land base in Alberta, will the Prime Minister urge the Minister of Indian Affairs to give money to the Lubicon band for legal costs in their fight to preserve their traditional land against encroachment by the Government of Alberta and multinational oil companies? Will he urge the Minister of Indian Affairs to quit stalling and to take action to validate a comprehensive claim for these people who have never signed a treaty with the Canadian Government?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is asking to me urge the Minister to do such and so. I cannot discuss that particular case. I just told the Hon. Member I did not recall the letter to which he referred. The Minister's actions since he has been Minister of Indian Affairs have been very consistent and persistent in attempting to solve the land claims issue. He has been successful in some cases. Certainly on the whole area of self-government with a land base, the Minister has been very forward looking and progressive. His statements—

Mr. Manly: Read the letter.

Mr. Trudeau: Now the Hon. Member is going back to his first question. I thought he wanted an answer to his second one.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS**NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY LIMITED—DATE OF DECISION TO SELL**

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Will the Minister inform the House when the decision was taken to sell Northern Transportation Company Limited? Was it advance knowledge of that decision that caused management of NTCL to charge to the Athabasca operation expenses incurred by other parts of NTCL to make it appear unprofitable? Will the Minister answer that?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered a question in the House some ten days ago where we did announce that we were beginning measures to privatize the Crown corporation, Northern Transportation Company Limited. However, the first step we will take is to have a full, independent evaluation before we put out the offers for private purchase, so we will be securing the services of an outside investment firm to give us that kind of financial analysis. Any actions taken by management are relative to that process because they will be done by an independent group.

DISPOSAL OF ATHABASCA ASSETS

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, because the Athabasca assets are now surplus to NTCL operations, will the Minister make a commitment that the dead assets of the Athabasca area no longer being operated by NTCL will be disposed of through Crown Assets Disposal Corporation, to allow residents of the Athabasca area to purchase them or, more particularly, that the City of Fort McMurray be given an opportunity to purchase the 35 acres of prime property contained within its borders?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, that is not really the kind of question I can answer during Question Period. I will take the Hon. Member's representation and examine it. I would point out that we took a position on the Fort McMurray alternative almost a year ago. There is a private development taking place in that area under agreements with other federal Departments. In terms of a specific request, I will refer to the proper authorities and get an answer for the Hon. Member.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS**PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF BELGIAN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL TRADE**

Mr. Speaker: May I call the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Andre Kempinaire, Secretary of State for External Trade, Belgium.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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INCOME TAX ACT**PROVISIONS AFFECTING ARTISTS**

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Tax Act that he has given to the Minister of National Revenue to administer enables him to treat *bona fide* Canadian artists as hobbyists and tax them accordingly. Meanwhile, Canadians can go across the line or to any other country and bring back good art duty free, which has the effect of enabling Canadians to boycott Canadian art and thereby have Canadian artists subsidize foreign artists. Does the Minister have any intention of changing the Income Tax Act so that Canadian artists will not be prejudiced by the Income Tax Act?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that the whole issue of the taxation system as it applies to artists is now being examined by a Parliamentary Committee. I am confident that the Committee will do an excellent job and make the necessary recommendations.