

Inquiries of the Ministry

INDIAN AFFAIRS—POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM WELFARE PROGRAM

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question arises from the same conference and is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. Arising from the reports that the provincial governments are not willing to provide welfare service to Indians because of the fear that the federal government might withdraw from the program once it is established, is the Prime Minister in a position to assure the provincial governments that the federal government will not withdraw support unilaterally from such a program?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Of course, Mr. Speaker, the kind of unilateral action to which the hon. member refers is not one the government would take, I would not want to speak for the minister responsible for Indian affairs. His policy on this particular point is being presented to the government. I cannot say what negotiations he has embarked upon with the provinces, but whatever they are it will not be done unilaterally.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In the proposal made by him to the provinces that they take over welfare services for the Indian people, which are now the responsibility of the federal government, did he propose to the provinces that the federal government was prepared to pay only for 85 per cent of existing welfare programs or did he propose that the federal government was prepared to pay the full amount now and in the future?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): The proposal was to bring the Indians to whom the hon. member is referring under the provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan but under a different cost-sharing arrangement which, depending on the province involved, would range from 85 to 97 per cent of the cost. Hopefully it would diminish over the years as the rehabilitation features of the Canada Assistance Plan took effect.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Did the minister give the provincial ministers an assurance that there would be no possibility of a unilateral withdrawal from this program if it was agreed to?

[Mr. Munro.]

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, I think the majority, if not all, of the welfare ministers were aware that discussions had gone on between the federal and provincial finance ministers as to cost sharing and, if there was a withdrawal, whether tax points would be given up by the federal government and so on, and that all this was in a state of negotiation in terms of the constitution and federal-provincial relations. So that it was not really pertinent to our discussion inasmuch as these discussions have been going on at other levels so far as the whole picture is concerned with regard to the cost-sharing programs that we have.

[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

PUBLICATION OF EXCHEQUER COURT RULES

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I recently asked the Minister of Justice whether the rules of the Exchequer Court would be translated into French, and I was told that the new bilingual edition was expected to be published early in 1969. Is the Minister of Justice in a position to indicate the approximate date of publication, in French and English, of the rules of the Exchequer Court?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Within a few weeks, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

GRAIN

VANCOUVER, B.C.—POSSIBILITY OF CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE TO RELIEVE CONGESTION

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, in the light of the very serious problem of grain congestion at the port of Vancouver, can the minister advise the house whether the recent suggestion to set up a Vancouver co-ordinating committee in the grain trade has been carried out?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce announced to the house that some meetings had been arranged and indeed meetings have been held in Vancouver of what is in effect a subcommittee of the overall co-ordinating committee involving the grain companies, the Wheat Board, the transportation companies and the terminal operators.