

Oral Questions

would like to say that the ratification last week by the Council for Yukon Indians of a framework agreement put together by the three principals in the negotiations, the Council for Yukon Indians, the federal Government, and the Yukon Government, was indeed historic and did go beyond what happened with the Dene and Métis. To that extent, I must say that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development deserves some credit, as do the other negotiators.

Having gone this far in this important and historic step in the longest outstanding land claims negotiation in Canada, is the Government now prepared to initiate immediate talks with the principals to clear up the two outstanding issues, and what is the time frame for that?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to refer that request for information to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I was pleased to hear the Hon. Member's comments at the time that historic step was taken, and I know that she and others have done everything possible to try to move this forward. However, I will refer her request for the next stage, the final ratification, to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development so that he can give her information with regard to the proposed timetable for the final steps.

YUKON LAND CLAIM SETTLEMENT

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the Acting Prime Minister knows, this particular ratification does require the consent of the three parties and will eventually have to go to Cabinet for certain aspects of it. Therefore, I would ask the Acting Prime Minister if she is prepared to say what the commitment of the Government is, now that the Council for Yukon Indians has kept its end of the bargain by ratifying its framework agreement, to complete this agreement. Will Cabinet deal with this expeditiously so that we can finally have, for the first time in nine years, a settled land claim in Canada?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member was quoted in the press the other day as saying that this is really just a framework, not a final settlement, and she wants to know what the details of that final settlement are. I am not in a position to give her the details of that final settlement today, but I have said that I would refer the requests she has raised to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I can tell the Hon. Member that this is considered to be a major and important priority for the Government, and there will be continuing attention paid to all the details so that we can bring in that historic final document that she mentions.

HOUSING

METROPOLITAN TORONTO—CNR LAND HOLDINGS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the two Ministers of Transport, I address my question to the Acting Prime Minister. My question concerns the Government's silence on the intensifying crisis in affordable housing facing many Canadians in Metropolitan Toronto.

Earlier this month the City of Toronto announced a \$1.2 billion housing program that would include a parcel of land which holds 15 acres owned and controlled by Canadian National Railways, a federal Crown corporation. In support of the public interest in reliable and affordable housing in Metropolitan Toronto, has the federal Government instructed the CNR to release its land holdings and therefore to become a viable and co-operative partner in this housing venture? If so, when can we expect a formal agreement to be signed between the federal CNR and the City of Toronto?

Mrs. Shirley Martin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, Canadian National is a Crown corporation, and of course, works at arm's length from the federal Government. As well, the federal Government has instructed all Departments that hold lands in the city of Toronto to review the need for those lands, along with the Bureau of Real Property Management. We are looking at the lands, we are looking at what is available, and as soon as we know what is available, they will be disposed of in an equitable manner.

• (1450)

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I tell the Parliamentary Secretary that this is not a case of reviewing lands. This is a golden opportunity that cries out for a federal partnership with federally available land. The Government must make up its mind whether it will be a partner or not.

CANADA POST CORPORATION LAND HOLDINGS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Post Office. Given that many people are requesting that federal surplus lands be first and foremost considered for federal housing, can the Minister inform the House whether the Government is prepared to utilize the very substantial and surplus post office lands in Metropolitan Toronto for badly needed housing rather than selling these sites for top dollar value, which not only loses us the federal lands which are very valuable but which ironically also increases the spiralling costs of land for housing?

Will the Government finally take advantage of these land opportunities and provide some real federal leadership in the area of housing in Metropolitan Toronto?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, a great proportion of Canada Post's capital facilities in lands and buildings are in fact leased from