

THE CONSTITUTION

MEECH LAKE ACCORD—CREATION OF NEW PROVINCES

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister. The Accord suggests, for the first time, that unanimity will be required for the establishment of new provinces, particularly in relation to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Given the obvious injustice of this and the comments found in the report of the committee, will the Prime Minister undertake to contact Premiers to work toward redressing this injustice?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not have to contact the Premiers. I think that they are acquainted with my strong views and the views of my colleagues in regard to moving along, as quickly as is possible, the right to provincehood of the people of the territories. This is very much a front and centre issue with us. We want to work very carefully and closely with all the people involved in this regard.

FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL, AND TERRITORIAL CONSULTATION

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, given that the report of the Constitution Committee states that there will be considerable discussion with the provincial Legislatures and provincial Attorneys General, will the Prime Minister undertake to assure residents of the territories that equal consultation will take place with the Ministers of Justice and the territorial Legislatures to continue the constitutional review?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the position of this Party and of this Government in regard to provincehood and legitimate rights for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories is well known. We believe that the Meech Lake Accord is another step along the road of nation-building which will ultimately and happily, we think, conclude with all Canadians being represented in this process, along with rights for native peoples. Only then will the Government be pleased with the process.

In regard to consultation, I would be delighted to give my hon. friend the assurance that the historic degree of consultation that I have undertaken as Prime Minister, and which my colleagues have undertaken, which has changed the atmosphere of federal-provincial relations from one of confrontation to one of genuine co-operation, shall be actively pursued and maintained with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

REFUGEES

COST OF WELFARE FOR REFUGEE CLAIMANTS IN TORONTO

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Minister is aware that Metropolitan Toronto has asked the Government to pay at least a portion of the \$1.5 million a year which it costs it to process welfare payments for refugee claimants. Bearing in mind the fact that refugees are a matter of federal rather than local jurisdiction, will the Minister assure the House that the Government will grant that request? Surely the Minister does not expect Canadians to foot these bills out of their property taxes.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks a good question. It seems to outline some of the confusion that exists in Ontario with respect to what the Government of Canada has to support in terms of the cost for social welfare recipients, especially those who claim welfare. Some 50 per cent of the cost is paid by the federal Government, while the other 50 per cent is paid by the province. Any agreement between the provincial level and the municipal level has to be decided between both parties.

The federal Government does not have the right to interfere in a decision concerning the share of costs between municipalities and a provincial Government. Any complaint at that level has to be dealt with at the provincial level. The Canadian Government respects this commitment and pays 50 per cent of the cost.

* * *

● (1440)

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

LIAISON WITH ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General.

We all know that the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service have deliberately been given overlapping mandates. It is the responsibility of the Minister to see that jurisdictional issues that arise between them are settled.

The other day the Minister told us that he had set up a liaison committee between the two services to end what he called "the state of confrontation" that existed during the time of his predecessor, the present Minister of National Defence.

Will the Minister tell the House if that committee has done any effective work? Have any issues been resolved between the two services? If so, what issues have been resolved? It is obvious that national security is threatened by the confrontation that continues to exist between the agencies.