

[Translation]

POST OFFICE

MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND CNTU PRESIDENT—STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH FORMER EMPLOYEES OF G. LAPALME INCORPORATED

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Referring to a statement made at a press conference by the President of the CNTU last Sunday in Montreal that a letter had been sent to the Prime Minister, soliciting an interview at the earliest possible date in order to obtain clarification of the federal government's policy concerning the CNTU, has the Prime Minister received such a letter and is he prepared to meet the President of the CNTU for such discussions?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not received a letter, but a telegram concerning this matter and I have effectively replied, informing the President of the CNTU that I am prepared to see him. I suggested that the meeting take place on Friday, unless he prefers some day next week, and I have as yet had no reply from him.

Mr. La Salle: Are we to infer from the Prime Minister's agreement to meet the President of the CNTU that he is prepared to discuss or negotiate further the case of the Lapalme workers, in view of the circumstances?

Mr. Trudeau: Since the letter has been made public, the hon. member knows that the gist of the telegram was that the government is discriminating against the CNTU, an allegation which I refuted in my reply as it applies to the facts I mentioned. I invited the President of the CNTU to come and discuss that point and any others, if he so wishes.

Mr. George Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a supplementary question to the Prime Minister.

Can he say whether he anticipates that specific offers will be made to the former employees of G. Lapalme Inc. in order to give them some hope of finding work shortly?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, when we made our second series of offers in December, we stated that they were final. Since then, there have been no further offers and I do not anticipate any. I would naturally be delighted to receive the suggestions of members of the official opposition as to what steps should be taken in the interest of the public.

Mr. Valade: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Since the Prime Minister invited suggestions, could he ask his colleague the Minister of Labour, who seems to have positive suggestions to make, whether he is prepared to advise the House as to the suggestions he intends to make to the former employees of G. Lapalme Inc.?

Mr. Trudeau: I can see, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member does not have any ideas.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a supplementary question to the Prime Minister.

Has he withdrawn the offer he had made to the former employees of G. Lapalme Inc. on their last visit on Parliament Hill where he met with them?

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[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

SETTLING OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY OIL PIPELINE

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the fact that the government appears to be advocating the benefits of the Mackenzie Valley route as the route for the pipeline from the north to the United States, a view with which I agree, will the minister assure the House that before any decisions are made, the aboriginal rights of the native peoples of the territories will be settled in a way that justice will be done to their claims?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member read closely the statement I made on the subject last August, he will remember that we told the companies concerned that we would take the necessary steps to protect the interests of northern residents during the construction of the pipeline, and that we would give the matter priority.

[English]

RECOGNITION OF ABORIGINAL TITLE OF OLD CROW TRIBE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY OIL PIPELINE

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Can the minister assure the House that the aboriginal title of the Old Crow Indian people, who have been in possession of their land for centuries, is going to be recognized by the government before any pipeline construction begins?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the matter of the Indians' rights was clearly defined when the Indian policy was submitted in June 1969. As regards the Indians of the Old Crow Tribe and the problems relevant to their fishing and trapping rights, I assured them on the occasion of my two visits there that we would do everything possible to protect their interests in any future negotiation.

[English]

STATUS OF WHITE PAPER ON POLICY

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): My supplementary question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern