

Oral Questions

peoples—and Canada has many such treaties—and, finally, that 1992 is to be set aside as the International Year for the Recognition of Indigenous Rights.

Can the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development explain to the House and to the aboriginal people of Canada why Canadian officials in Geneva are actively lobbying against these resolutions and trying to have their approval quashed?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the activities of officials in Geneva but I am aware of some of the concerns that have been expressed by aboriginal peoples in Canada to the United Nations and those concerns are being heard.

One of the reasons, I could assume—but I do not know—that officials may be putting forward a Canadian point of view is that under the UN Charter all existing avenues for redress in your own country must be explored before you go to the United Nations. In several cases in Canada, as the Hon. Member knows, there are court actions and other avenues of redress which aboriginal people have not followed to fruition and they are now pursuing their claims in other areas of jurisdiction. I hope they could be pursued in Canada.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, the Minister will realize upon reflection how inadequate that answer was.

REQUEST THAT OFFICIALS BE INSTRUCTED TO SUPPORT
RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I have been in touch in Geneva with the Grand Council of the Cree of Quebec. I have in my hand a direct intervention made before the Sub-Commission by a Canadian delegation.

Will the Minister arrange a meeting this week, possibly today or at the latest tomorrow, with the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and will the two of them send a very strongly worded directive to the Canadian officials in Geneva and tell them to get behind these resolutions and give Canada's fullest support to the United Nations Human Rights Commission?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I should not have to remind the Hon. Member of the commitment of the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs to human rights, in Canada and around the world. Despite all the good intentions that my colleague may have, the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs does not have to consult with me or the Hon. Member. His record and that of Canada are well known throughout the world.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

PROPOSED TORONTO HEADQUARTERS—SCARBOROUGH SITE

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. Very soon the CBC is expected to present a plan to the Government for its proposed new Metro Toronto headquarters. Scarborough has offered a site which is part of Canada's most exciting architectural complex which would represent only 5 per cent of the cost of the proposed City of Toronto site.

Will the Minister assure the House that, in the interests of the Canadian taxpayer, the Scarborough proposal will be included in those considered by the Government?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, some two years ago the Cabinet gave the CBC the authority to call for proposals for the construction of a new broadcast centre in Toronto. I am sure we all recognize that the present facilities of the CBC there are inadequate.

I want to inform the Hon. Member and others that the CBC is in the process of finalizing the proposal that it will present to Cabinet. This will come before Cabinet by the end of March. I am certain that even though we have not yet received the proposal from the CBC, it will take note of what the Hon. Member has had to say.

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ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA—NISHGA COUNCIL'S CLAIM

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Since September 4, 1984, the Prime Minister has never once spoken out in support of what is apparently his own government policy to settle comprehensive aboriginal claims in British Columbia.

● (1450)

Since the only active negotiation is with the Nishga Tribal Council in the Nass Valley, and since there has been no progress on this claim since 1984, will the Prime Minister take this opportunity to endorse the policy of negotiated settlement and assure Canadians that the steps necessary to achieve settlement will in fact be taken now?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, my colleague, the Hon. Minister of State, implemented a new comprehensive claims policy after consulting with Indian leadership in Canada. We went forward after the implementation of that was announced in December, 1986.

Presently six claims are under active negotiation in Canada. I hope they can be settled. If we cannot come to a settlement