

Oral Questions

I would be remiss if I did not point out to the hon. member that there is an opportunity for this issue to be discussed in a parliamentary committee. I understand the terms of reference have not been set, and certainly there has been no concern expressed on my part as to the scope of that inquiry. I believe that is probably the best form to do it.

The short answer to his question is that I have no plans to introduce such an inquiry.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister recalls that last spring the federal government made many promises to the aboriginal people about dealing very soon with their constitutional concerns.

What I want to know from the Deputy Prime Minister today is whether or not action will be taken immediately to deal with those constitutional concerns now instead of waiting until after Spicer reports on July 1.

While he is on his feet, can he now give a commitment that there will be some representative appointed to the Spicer commission from the northern territories, because they are now unrepresented on that commission. It is a very important part of Canada.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the aboriginal constitutional dossier, the House will have heard me say before that no one is more disappointed than I am that the Meech Lake Accord failed to be ratified, because that accord and its companion resolution put into place a process which would have guaranteed meetings on a regular basis and an established process for addressing aboriginal constitutional concerns.

With the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and with the lack of a disposition among the provinces to engage in constitutional discussions, it is not possible to proceed with that. As the hon. member will know, the federal government cannot unilaterally institute constitutional discussions.

However, that being said, I believe that the Spicer commission will in and of itself involve Canadians in discussing some of the very vexing questions in front of us, including the questions of collective rights in Canadian society. Those that are asserted both by particular linguistic groups and by our aboriginal community.

At the same time, we are proceeding with a great deal of determination in those areas that do not require constitutional change and where we can show our bonafides and our very strong intention to better the lot of aboriginal people in this country.

I refer, in particular, to the land claims area where there is a considerable amount of effort being spent, particularly in my own province of British Columbia, in the area of aboriginal justice. I believe in that area we can make progress without constitutional change.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for Canada Post.

The government continues its destruction of rural postal services in Canada. Closures, privatization and even removal of the Canadian flag and the corporation's emblem. Furthermore, the minister gave preferential treatment to the Minister of Public Works when the corporation cancelled its project for a commercial outlet in Central Nova. Why the double standard, one for Canadians and one for ministers?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post continues to open up new postal outlets in conjunction with commercial outlets, which are frequently open longer hours than the corporate-run postal outlets. The service has been improving. Everywhere these changes are made, whether rural Canada or urban Canada, when they go back with a post-change survey, they find that customer satisfaction is 70 per cent to 80 per cent.