

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PASSPORT GUARANTORS—OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF
VETERINARIANS

Mr. Bruce Lonsdale (Timiskaming): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On Friday last the minister was questioned with respect to the non-recognition of veterinarians as official guarantors for passport applications. Subsequent to that, I and many other members of Parliament inquired of the minister and made representations urging support for the proposition that veterinarians, because of their unique position in the agricultural community and in the rural areas of the country, because of their constant contact with individuals in remote sections of the country and because of their particular position of trust and respect, be officially recognized as official guarantors for passport applications.

Has the minister reconsidered his position, and is he prepared to announce today that veterinarians will indeed be recognized as official guarantors for passport applications?

Mr. Crosbie: The answer is yes.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I said last Friday. The list of guarantors for passports is not intended and does not function as a recognition of various professions or businesses, but as a result of the representations made by my hon. friend, the hon. member for Timiskaming, and other hon. members, I have come to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to add veterinarians to the list.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: How is that for crow tasting?

Miss MacDonald: You look embarrassed.

Mr. MacGuigan: I am glad to see so many veterinarians in the House!

An hon. Member: They are donkeys on the other side.

Mr. MacGuigan: As I was saying—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I did not think veterinarians would cause such excitement.

Mr. MacGuigan: As I was saying, the purpose of this is to serve the rural people of Canada, not to extend recognition to a profession which is already well recognized.

However, I will just add that because passport applications have recently been reprinted, it will be some time before the written recognition of veterinarians will appear on those forms.

The Constitution

THE CONSTITUTION

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR
REPORT

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I rise on a very important point of order which is also very urgent because it is related to an issue which is very well known by all my colleagues in this place. It is related to the deadline for the joint committee's dealing with the constitution matter.

I would have liked the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) to be in the House, but I understand he has an engagement. I learned that just a few minutes ago. In any case, I see that the deputy House leader of the Conservative party and the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) are both here, and I have given notice of my intention to rise on a point of order. I did not specify what I would say, but I am at ease when I speak in the absence of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton because I think he will be in agreement with all I will say. If not, we will find out later, but I have no doubt in my mind.

May I say—and I offer as a witness the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who attended our last meeting—that we received a final proposal from the opposition parties, and it was agreed amongst us that if we were to agree to that final proposal I would be free to move a motion from the floor of the House and receive unanimous consent, without debate, for the motion.

The matter is very simple. The offer is related only to a date, and it is without condition. The last proposal—and I will not get into the details of the negotiations or explain them here because I want to be brief—from the opposition parties was that the committee report at the latest on February 6, 1981. That was the firm and final proposal made. The agreement is that if we were to agree to that, we were to come here. If we were to disagree, we could make our case public.

I am glad to report that we agreed to that firm proposal, and therefore there must be unanimous consent for the following motion, which is very simple:

That the order of reference creating the Special Joint Committee on the Constitution of Canada be amended by deleting the words "December 9, 1980" and substituting therefor the words "February 6, 1981"; and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours thereof and to invite them to join with this House in the aforementioned action.

I move that motion, seconded by the right hon. member for Yellowhead.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, with respect to the point of order raised by the government House leader, I had an opportunity to discuss very briefly and very sketchily with the opposition House leader the discussions which took place among the House leaders on this question. It was not my intimation from the opposition House leader that there was a firm, be-all, and end-all agreement with respect to the date of February 6, beyond which we would not go. My understand-