

parliamentary task forces on North-South relations, whether the government is now reviewing its public assistance policies and whether we can expect that in the near future the government will make a statement on the revision of those policies so as to ensure that people will show renewed interest in the Prime Minister's personal endeavour as regards the North-South dialogue?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. member for Gloucester and the task force he chaired for the interest they have generated in this issue. I for one believe it is important that the Canadian public be made aware of the recommendations of the committee. Speaking for the government, we are obviously quite delighted to have that report and we have begun to study it. I leave it to the Secretary of State for External Affairs to expound on what action the government might take in future. For the time being, however, I can assure the hon. member that besides increasing the funds earmarked for international aid, as announced by the Minister of Finance, I have had several exchanges with the CIDA president, Mr. Massé, and we are steering a course of action which will closely parallel the over-all recommendations of the hon. member's task force.

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[English]

NORTHERN PIPELINES

PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY LINE—SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS OF DENE NATION

Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiag): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. Only three years ago Mr. Justice Thomas Berger, who was appointed by the Prime Minister, recommended a ten-year moratorium on any pipeline project in the Mackenzie Valley so that the Dene Nation would have time to settle their land claims with the federal government, and yet the EARP report has recommended that the pipeline may go ahead as early as next year. Will the Prime Minister assure this House that he will respect the recommendations of the Dene Nation, Mr. Justice Berger and the government of the Northwest Territories and that no pipeline will be approved until the settlement of claims has been implemented in the Mackenzie Valley?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I might deal with the hon. member's question, Madam Speaker. It is true the EARP panel did inject some very serious reservations in terms of environmental dangers with respect to the Norman Wells pipeline. Undoubtedly that will be given very serious consideration by the National Energy Board. In terms of the decision whether or not to go ahead, it would be premature at this stage because, as the hon. member may be aware, the National Energy Board is dealing with the question. According to my information, it does not expect to come in with a finding for at least six to

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eight weeks. At that time a decision can be made by the government as to whether the suggested recommendations be implemented or not. Certainly it is premature to deal with it now; for all we know, the National Energy Board may not approve it.

Mr. Ittinuar: I will direct my supplementary to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister commit his government to the settlement of claims before the pipeline is built?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, it is my hope, and I believe this is the feeling of the leadership of the Dene, that the claims question can get under way and progress very rapidly over the course of the next year. Certainly Mr. Erasmus, the head of the Dene, indicated he would be ready for the appointment of a negotiator. I hope to be able to do that very shortly and that some real progress can be made on land claims, irrespective of what happens with respect to Norman Wells.

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● (1150)

STATISTICS ACT

DECENNIAL CENSUS—RECRUITMENT OF COMMISSIONERS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Supply and Services, partly to allow him to pierce the veil of cobwebs that surrounds him during question period. In response to a question by my colleague the hon. member for Leeds-Grenville in respect of the census that is to take place, the minister indicated that traditionally a list of nominations provided by government party MPs and local representatives has been a source for potential census commissioners.

Quite apart from the fact that it is going to be rather difficult for the minister to consult his members from any point west of Winnipeg, I would ask him whether he will now change the policy and take a more impartial view of the appointment of census commissioners? The people of Canada expect impartiality and do not want any tinge of partisanship or the suggestion of partisanship on the part of the people conducting the census. Will the minister now commit himself to change this policy?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): First of all, Madam Speaker, I am very grateful to the hon. gentleman for his consideration in the removal of, as he points out, the cobwebs that surround me. I would point out to him that, in effect, the tradition being followed through in this census is one which definitely was about to be adopted by my predecessor in that position in the former government. I would point out to him as well that the quality of the individuals who are to be hired in this process is established through very objective means indeed.

An hon. Member: Liberal Party membership.