

the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to mediate in the South Moresby-Lyell Island dispute. What proposal can the Prime Minister put forward now that would resolve this tragic and troublesome dispute in British Columbia?

● (1420)

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I might be allowed to respond to the question of my hon. friend by saying that the process which was initiated a few days ago is still in train. There have been some discussions with all parties, and I will be maintaining my contact with those parties. I am hopeful we will be able to arrive at an opportunity for a meeting to bring about some process of mediation.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER INTERVENE

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): I should like to come back to the Prime Minister. Last week the Prime Minister was asked on several occasions to intervene personally. It seems that we have reached an impasse, and I am wondering whether the Prime Minister would agree, when he meets with the Premier of British Columbia, to take up this matter with him personally, before the situation gets entirely out of hand and becomes even more tragic than it is at this very moment.

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, as it is my responsibility, asked me to participate in this matter, and I suggest that before people rush to the judgment that we have reached an impasse, they allow the process which is currently in train to proceed, in the hope that it will yield some results.

ATTENDANCE AT PROPOSED MEETING

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): My question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I think all Members of this House were very pleased with the Minister's decision last Thursday night to begin negotiations on the comprehensive claim of the Haida people to the Queen Charlotte Islands, particularly in relation to Lyell Island and the South Moresby conflict.

But, to use the Minister's own words, as of Thursday night the situation was dangerous. As I am sure he is aware, a few moments ago another 19 Haida Indians were arrested.

I am wondering whether the Minister can bring us up to date, in relation to tomorrow's proposed meeting, in terms of whether or not any of the players involved—Western Forest Products Limited, the Haida Indians, or the B.C. Government—have agreed to come to such a meeting in Vancouver or Victoria tomorrow?

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I think the only thing I can do at this time which might be useful is to tell the Hon.

Member that the people who are concerned with this have asked me, along with the Minister of the Environment, to continue the process toward a meeting which could begin a process of mediation.

I was in communication just prior to Question Period with members of the Haida Indian Band, and as well there was communication earlier today with the Government of British Columbia. Also, two other parties have indicated an interest in such a meeting.

I think it is far too early to arrive at any conclusions. I am hoping to have another day or two in order to arrive at a situation in which the opportunities may become more clear.

ARREST OF ELDERLY INDIANS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the situation, as I know the Minister knows, is extremely urgent. I am wondering whether he can tell the House whether there are any additional administrative or constitutional powers, given the special relationship that this House of Commons has with the Haida people, that he might be able to make use of in this situation.

As we know now, 35 Haida Indians have been arrested in recent days, some as old as 80 years of age.

I am wondering whether there are some powers or initiatives, aside from the negotiation process, that the Minister might be able to use during this very crucial period so as to assist the Haida people in this very urgent situation.

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, at this point I think everyone would agree that the most important thing to be achieved is a meeting of the parties. If there is some further power or substantive support that I might need from the Members of this House, I know that I can call on it and receive it. But I think at this point the single most important step we can take is to have all Members bend their efforts to achieving the meeting of the parties involved.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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TRADE

EXPORTS OF LUMBER TO UNITED STATES

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Reports out of Washington indicate that the U.S. senior trade representative, Mr. Yeutter, is going to his Cabinet tomorrow to discuss a whole set of new proposals to reopen negotiations with Canada on the lumber trade, including the discussion of stumpage fees, and that this is a prior condition to Congress being asked for approval to proceed with the general trade negotiation.