

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(h), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday next, December 5, 1995, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

• (1410)

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

DEATH OF MATTHEW VAUDREUIL—NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, pursuant to rules 56(1) and 57(2), I give notice that on Wednesday next, December 6, 1995, I will call the attention of the Senate to the child abuse and neglect death — or CAN — of five-year old Matthew Vaudreuil, and to his mother Verna Vaudreuil's role in that child abuse and neglect death, and to the inquiry by the Honourable Judge Thomas J. Gove, called the Gove inquiry into Child Protection, being an inquiry into the state of child protection services in the Province of British Columbia as they relate to the apparent child abuse and neglect death of Matthew Vaudreuil.

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL UNITY

INDIAN AFFAIRS—DOCUMENT ON POST-REFERENDUM POLICY PURPORTEDLY PREPARED BY OFFICIAL—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Charlie Watt: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate, and relates to an article in yesterday's *Globe and Mail*, concerning a document that supposedly was leaked from the Department of Indian Affairs. On the one hand, I guess it is not surprising to read something along the lines of what is stated in that leaked document. Is this document a true representation of the views of the administration of the government? Further, does the document come from the administrative level or from the political level of the government?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I assume that my honourable friend is referring to the article concerning the Department of Indian Affairs and post-referendum policy. I can say most categorically that that document does not come from the political level. It was

a highly speculative piece of paper put together by someone in that department, and had nothing to do with the minister or anyone at the political level. Indeed, I would say its contents were not only naive, but very disrespectful of aboriginal peoples.

PRESENCE OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AT QUEBEC ROUND—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Charlie Watt: Honourable senators, will the aboriginal peoples of this country be involved in the next round of discussions between the Government of Canada and the provincial governments with respect to the distinct society provisions and the veto put forward by the Prime Minister as an offer to the government of Quebec?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the measures currently before the House of Commons are purely legislative in nature. They reflect the commitment or the intent of the Government of Canada to act in a certain manner in relation to the possibility, if any, in the years leading up to 1997, of dealing with the veto and also the commitment of recognizing the reality of Quebec.

Aboriginal peoples are fully protected under section 35 of the Constitution. Absolutely nothing in the two measures currently before the House of Commons in any way infringes or derogates from any of the rights or obligations under the Constitution for aboriginal peoples, including their claims, and the government's commitment within section 35, for recognition of their inherent rights.

Senator Watt: I take it, then, that aboriginal peoples will be invited to the Quebec round of discussions, as opposed to being left out and dealt with separately?

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, the only discussions contemplated in the area of constitutional change will be in 1997 when the Constitution itself says that the amending formula, currently in the Constitution, is up for review and discussion.

However, at this point in time, the only thing being dealt with is what is currently before the House of Commons. As I understand it, this is not a question of engaging in a round of discussion or negotiation.

Senator Watt: Honourable senators, I realize what the Prime Minister is attempting to do. I also understand the reply of the honourable leader to my questions. Nevertheless, even though the proposals from the Prime Minister are merely legislative initiatives, they certainly have a constitutional impact.

My question is this: Even though the Constitution itself is not being dealt with in the Quebec round of discussions leading up to Canadian unity, and even though this is a legislative measure, will aboriginal peoples be involved in these discussions in the future?

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, when those negotiations and discussions do take place in the future — although certainly not at this point in time — aboriginal peoples will have a role to play. I am certainly supportive of that.