Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member's question was put in an excellent way but it is still out of order, in the sense that he is asking for a statement which ought to be made on motions.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

RETRIEVAL OF CANADIAN STUDENTS FROM UNITED STATES

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): I should like to address my question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Mr. Speaker. In view of the great difficulty it is expected will be encountered this coming summer by Canadian students, both graduates and undergraduates, is it the intention of the government to continue to send teams of men employed by the Public Service Commission into the United States to coax Canadian students back to Canada?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): This operation of retrieval has been going on for some time now, and it has not been discontinued.

Mr. Hales: Is it the intention to discontinue this retrieval procedure?

Mr. MacEachen: No consideration has been given to the discontinuance of a program which we believe to be in the national interest.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

BATH-MILLHAVEN FEDERAL PRISON COMPLEX

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Speaker. I might add that I have given the minister notice. Is the department aware that a certain sub-contractor who was recently connected with the construction of the Bath-Millhaven federal prison complex is failing to honour his local financial obligations and has issued many cheques for labour and services which have been returned marked N.S.F., causing great inconvenience in my riding?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Although the question may be of some urgency, it is the type of question which in my view should be discussed at the time of adjournment rather than asked at this moment.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

POSTPONEMENT OF CONFERENCE ON NATIVE PEOPLE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development whether the proposed national consultation on Indian affairs has been postponed and, if so, why?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Yes, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Skeena asked the same question last night.

The consultations set for March have been postponed for the following reasons: 17 meetings with Indian representatives have been held across Canada since last July. The last one was held in Terrace, British Columbia, as recently as January 28. Many documents have been printed. The delegates have been provided with the reports on the first 15 meetings and the two last reports should be available soon. Those reports have now to be examined and assimilated.

The reason why this meeting has been postponed, Mr. Speaker, is that some Indian delegates have asked for a little more time to read those reports, and more so because two reports are still unpublished, as some consultations took place as late as the end of January.

[English]

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the minister what reply he has made to the complaint of the Indian Association of Alberta that it has been denied the degree of representation promised it at such consultation meeting?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I have not yet answered the request of the Alberta Indians regarding their representation, but I do not believe that the Indians of Alberta should have a special status compared with the other Indians of Canada.

[English]
[Later:]

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to one asked a few moments ago by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and is directed to the Minister without Portfolio who is responsible for Indian affairs. In view of the fact that the Minister without Portfolio was present at the Alberta hearings when the Alberta Indians elected six delegates to attend