

that a proposal was made by the minister, secretly, late last week to the executive committee of the Yukon territorial government and to the Council of Yukon Indians with respect to setting up a public inquiry which will be charged with inquiring into constitutional development.

Will the minister explain whether the story is accurate and, if it is, why there was this gross intrusion into the affairs of the people of the Yukon who should make these decisions through their elected representatives in their own assembly?

● (1442)

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that last fall I met with the members of the Territorial Council and we discussed the question of the next phase of constitutional development. I told them at that time that I felt we should focus on a process which could lead us in that direction. I promised the Council that I would give it some thought, discuss the matter with my colleagues and come back to them with a proposed process. That is what I did Friday of last week in Whitehorse. I am awaiting a response from them.

Mr. Nielsen: The article goes on to stipulate one of the considerations and says that such a public inquiry created by the federal ministry, instead of by the elected assembly of the Yukon, will create a resource revenue-sharing program with one-third of resource revenues going to the native people in the Yukon, one-third to the other 80 per cent of the population of the Yukon, and one-third to the federal government.

Does the minister not realize that such a proposal, including federal intrusion by setting up such an inquiry, is furthering the creation of an apartheid situation in the Yukon, and by such a suggestion he is encouraging the inevitable result of seriously imperilling the pipeline legislation which is now before the committee?

Mr. Faulkner: Mr. Speaker, I categorically reject the piece of alarmism that my proposal on Friday will in any way jeopardize, compromise or affect the pipeline. I think it is irresponsible for the hon. member to make that sort of suggestion. Secondly, he knows as well as I do that we are both trying to work toward avoiding any form of apartheid in the Yukon. Dean Lysyk drew our attention that a fracturing is taking place there. I am trying to find a process that will abridge that fracturing. I would hope to have the hon. member's support in that effort.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, the minister will have my support, as he has all along, with respect to the avoidance of an apartheid situation in the Yukon, which I suggest he is furthering. The only method by which he can circumvent that situation is adopting the policy which has been expressed on this side of the House by our leader and create a province of the Yukon. That will solve his problem. Will the minister consider that?

Oral Questions

POST OFFICE

STEPS TAKEN TO AVERT STRIKES

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. The Postmaster General rose in his place in this House yesterday and said, concerning the Post Office:

I think everything is being done to avoid a strike. I can tell you, sir, that if we have a strike at this moment, it would not be our responsibility. Everything, as far as management is concerned, is being done to avoid it—

In view of that, could the minister now tell the House when the CUPW first made its contract proposals, when the department first responded in detail to these proposals, and why the conciliation process has not yet started?

[*Translation*]

Hon. J.-Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I think the question put by the hon. member for Nickel Belt is very clear. As everyone knows very well, we are now at the conciliation stage and each party is discussing what clauses may or may not be negotiated. As soon as that matter is resolved, conciliation as such can start, which should be within about a week.

[*English*]

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Postmaster General's answer reveals a complete lack of knowledge of what is taking place with respect to the negotiations within the department, in view of the fact the union first made its proposals to the department ten months ago, in April, 1977, and to this day the Post Office Department has not responded to those proposals of the union, and in view of the fact that after requesting and having the union agree to conciliation in November, 1977, the department turned around in January and asked for a delay so they could respond to the union's proposals of ten months earlier, could the minister tell the House just how this lack of response and record of inaction constitutes the fact that management is doing everything it can?

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, I think we are doing everything we can. It might be useful for the hon. member for Nickel Belt to know exactly what I have done in the last month. I have met with all the union leaders. I have met with top management. The GLT agreement has been exercised and we do not have any rotating strikes at the moment. We have nominated the president of the conciliation board. The Hubling commission is reacting now concerning the horror stories of last December.

We have visited many plants in Toronto and other places and talked to the workers. I have repeatedly invited CUPW to come and talk with us. I have even invited the president, Mr. Parrot, to discuss his "pet baby", which is the establishment of a Crown corporation. I said to him, "We will discuss it together". Up to now we have had only refusals.