

attention of the minister, although I am surprised that there can be comment on the impact of the change when the size of the change is not known.

[*Translation*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATE MINISTRY

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs are absent, I direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Indians of Canada met the cabinet and submitted a brief. Could the Acting Prime Minister tell the House whether the government intends to create a separate Indian affairs department?

[*English*]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Acting Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, as acting minister in the absence of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development I can assure the hon. member that the recommendations made to the Prime Minister and the cabinet yesterday were very respectfully received. They were very interesting and very constructive. The government is going to address itself to the examination of the options suggested by the Indian leaders, including that kind of recommendation, but they are so wide-ranging that some time is going to be required, as the Indian leaders fully understand, to examine all the suggestions before any decision is made.

WIDENING OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF CLAIMS COMMISSIONER TO COVER CLAIMS OF NON-TREATY INDIANS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): As a result of the discussions yesterday and previously, is the government considering widening the terms of reference of the Claims Commissioner to include claims of the native people—Indians and Eskimos—in areas of the north not now covered by treaty and which consequently cannot be pressed before the commission?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Acting Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I note the hon. member's question, Mr. Speaker, and with respect, suggest that I could not add anything to the answer I gave a minute ago about the wide range of the recommenda-

Inquiries of the Ministry

tions made yesterday, all of which must be examined by the government before any pronouncement is made.

Mr. Baldwin: In view of the claims that have been advanced, including those by the native people of northern Quebec, will the minister please put this matter before the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the government so that adequate study can be given to this very important and current issue?

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE BODY

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): In view of the fact that the Indian people yesterday made two suggestions, among others, of an immediate nature, one of which related to the creation of a new consultative body mutually acceptable to both the government and the Indians to deal with certain matters because of their urgency, would the minister agree to give that a priority position and arrange to have some statement made by the government on Monday or Tuesday of next week on its response to that request?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Acting Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I could, of course, make no such commitment in my present capacity, but I shall be glad to draw the representation to the attention of the minister and ask him to provide a response at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can put the same question to the Acting Prime Minister who may have a little bit more authority.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. The Acting Prime Minister has nothing to add to what has been said.

POLLUTION

ABILITY OF FOREIGN-REGISTERED SHIPS TO PREVENT OIL SPILLS

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Transport. With regard to the press conference held yesterday by Dr. Patrick McTaggart-Cowan concerning the inadequacies of many ships flying flags of convenience in being able to prevent pollution and oil spills, is the government taking steps to bring this matter before an international forum?