

Inquiries of the Ministry

Jail in Toronto. Is the minister now in a position to reply? [English]

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am now in a position to answer the question directed to me by the hon. member the other day, with respect to the holding of an Indian girl in jail.

That Indian girl left her reserve in British Columbia and travelled across Canada. Unfortunately, she was put in jail on a theft charge and was held there for some time. She did not inform the department and did not ask for assistance. We learned about her incarceration in the press.

We have services available to Indians who get into situations such as that one but we have to be informed before taking action. Unfortunately, the departmental officials were not aware of the plight of that poor girl.

[English]

Mr. Gleave: Would the minister, together with the appropriate departments of justice, set up some procedures that would take care of such situations?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, it is impossible for us to know the whereabouts of every Indian in the country, even if he is incarcerated. In this case, the person concerned was a girl of full legal age who had changed her name. Unfortunately, we were not informed of her sad situation.

The department has services available to Indians who find themselves in such desperate situations but, unfortunately, the girl in question did not consider it necessary to resort to them.

[English]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Did the minister ascertain during his investigation whether or not the girl in question was made aware of her rights and given an opportunity to get in touch with him or his department?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I think that this question should be asked of the people in charge of the administration of justice within their province.

[Mr. Gleave.]

STUDENT LOANS

CURTAILMENT OF GRANTS TO FOREIGN STUDENTS ENGAGED IN DISORDERLY ACTS

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the government is giving consideration to the curtailment of grants to foreign students attending Canadian universities under government auspices who engage in activities involving breaches of the peace, bloodshed and other acts of disorder?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the question is of a general nature. If the hon. member feels there is urgency he may wish to have it discussed at the time of adjournment.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Speaker, I might add that I have reference particularly to the unfortunate events which took place this morning at Sir George Williams University in the city of Montreal.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. If he will come forward I will ask it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. While the minister proceeds forward, the Chair recognizes the hon. member for Huron.

ESTATE TAX ACT

INQUIRY RESPECTING BASIC EXEMPTION

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he can now say he intends leaving the estate tax exemption at \$50,000 instead of changing it to \$20,000?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is not the case at all. I tried to table the explanation but hon. members opposite did not want it.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You tried to confuse the issue.

Mr. Benson: I should like to point out also that copies of this explanation will be available in the members' lobby as soon as they leave the house. What has happened is that estates under \$50,000 will not be subject to estates tax, but there has been no change in the high exemptions. The high exemptions that were in the estate tax provisions are still there, that is, \$20,000 plus \$10,000 for every—