

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I think the fishing industry recognizes that our approach to offshore problems on a wide front, including pollution and conservation of the living resources of the sea, is really paying off and that this is consistent with the recommendations of the Council. Fisheries matters cannot be separated from environmental matters.

Mr. Crouse: Will the minister be taking any action on the recommendation of the Fisheries Council of Canada that Canada formally withdraw recognition of jurisdiction of the International Commission for the North Atlantic Fisheries over exclusive Canadian fishing zones since ICNAF is setting quotas inside Canada's 12-mile limit?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I would be surprised if ICNAF had any authority in our own exclusive fishing zones. As the hon. member knows, these zones have been extended in recent years. In our international discussions we are concerned with catches outside our own exclusive fishing zones, outside the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for example.

Mr. Speaker: I believe the hon. member for York South has a supplementary to the previous question. If not, the Chair will recognize the Leader of the Opposition and then the hon. member for York South.

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PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—DECISION OF GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT CONSTRUCTION APPLICATIONS—SETTLEMENT OF LAND CLAIMS OF NATIVE PEOPLE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to question the Acting Prime Minister a little further with regard to the sudden about-face in connection with the pipeline in the north. Does the decision to accept applications mean that the government has decided there are no land claims of the native people that require settlement or does it mean they have been settled? I ask this question because when the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was questioned as recently as May 1, he said: These questions are hypothetical; nor have we decided whether a pipeline will be built or not, but we certainly hope one will be built. Now that the government has decided to accept applications and has decided in principle that a pipeline will be built, can the Acting Prime Minister state what this indicates as far as native claims are concerned?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, an application is still an application. Also, we are dealing here with a corridor as outlined by the Prime Minister in his announcement in Edmonton. The corridor in that area is a very tiny fraction of the area in which the Indian and other native people are involved. I am told that in the case of TAPS in Alaska there are only 20 square miles involved. I would assume from that that there will not be more than 40 or 50 square miles involved in putting a corridor down the Mackenzie Valley. Until we get these things in proper perspective, it is a little out of the way to

talk about the rights of people who are scattered throughout the entire area.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the minister reminds me of the girl who was only a little pregnant. I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the corridor spoken of by the Prime Minister runs from the Mackenzie River into Alaska.

Mr. Laing: Of course, Mr. Speaker, we have no right to talk about a corridor into Alaska.

Mr. Stanfield: That is right.

Mr. Laing: I find it difficult to answer this kind of question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the difficulty of the Acting Prime Minister or any member of the government answering questions in these circumstances, but I remind the Acting Prime Minister that the government has now decided to accept applications for a pipeline from Alaska.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition would agree that this is debate. The Leader of the Opposition might ask a supplementary question, which would ease the task of the Chair.

Mr. Stanfield: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would even like to ease the task of the government. Having reminded the Acting Prime Minister that the pipeline for which the government is seeking authorization not only runs up the Mackenzie River but across to Alaska, I now ask him whether that means the government has decided there are no significant Indian claims to land in that area or that any such claims have already been settled?

Mr. Laing: Mr. Speaker, one would have to know the geography of that area. There is a flat plain across the Arctic. If American oil were to come by way of the Mackenzie, it would come across that flat plain to the Yukon. The mountain range that would then be encompassed and dealt with would not be the Brooks range, but the British mountains in the territory of the Yukon.

Mr. Stanfield: You have all that information now.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will have to recognize the hon. member for York South. I appreciate that this matter is important, but I am sure it will not be settled between now and the next few days. Supplementaries can be asked at the next sitting of the House. If there is time, I will return to the hon. member for Athabasca.