

Inquiries of the Ministry

• (1450)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**INTENTION OF UNITED STATES RESPECTING RENEWAL OF LEASE OF AIR FORCE BASE, GOOSE BAY**

Mr. Ambrose Hubert Peddle (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Has the United States government indicated to Canada any intention of phasing down its base operation at Goose Bay or has it indicated its intention to maintain operations as at present?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, negotiations are presently going on with respect to United States operations at Goose Bay. When I have additional information that I can give to the hon. member, I shall be pleased to do so.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON ACTION TO PROTECT RIGHTS IN RELATION TO JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It has to do with difficulties connected with the James Bay power development project. Would the minister be prepared to make a statement on motions early next week, on Monday or Tuesday, outlining the position and action that he and his department have taken in regard to protecting the rights of the Indian people involved in the area?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, yesterday officials of my department met the representatives of the Indian Association of Quebec who submitted a proposal. I intend to discuss the matter personally with the Indian Association of Quebec before announcing the government's position in this respect.

[English]

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

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**REQUEST FOR ACTION FOLLOWING REMARK BY JUDGE CONCERNING INDIANS**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. Perhaps it is a related question, but since we are dealing with our first citizens may I direct my question to the Minister of Justice who I hope has had placed before him by the Prime Minister the matter of Judge Collins and his use of some derogatory remarks with regard to our first citizens.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alexander: My question is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has the floor for a supplementary question. If hon. members seek and obtain the floor for the purpose of asking supplementary questions which are not supplementary questions, there will be grave disorder during the question period. The hon. member wishes to ask a related question. I am prepared to recognize him for that purpose and he will be allowed to ask his question. I make these remarks as a caution to hon. members not to seek the floor for supplementaries when the questions are not really supplementaries. Having made these general remarks, the hon. member can proceed to ask his question.

Mr. Alexander: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I hope that at this particular stage of the question period, when we are talking about the rights of Canada's first citizens, we may ask questions about judges who are making derogatory remarks against them. If they are not to be treated as citizens it is meaningless for us to discuss their problems in regard to the James Bay project.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member should not ask the Chair to rule on that kind of point of order. He is obviously out of order. He was recognized for the purpose of asking a question which really was not a supplementary question. That is my ruling. However, he is still recognized for the purpose of asking the question to which he has just referred.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Justice again. Is the government prepared to make some statement, since it has had the opportunity of looking at this matter for some four months, on what the government's attitude is regarding the statement made by Judge Collins of Sudbury regarding Canada's first citizens? Has he looked into the matter and is he now prepared to make a statement in order that we may be advised whether this country is a multicultural country or not?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, this matter has been gone into thoroughly. May I say I regret that the hon. member, with his legal mind, would liken one situation to another, which can cause great unfairness to individual people involved, as he did in his question the other day. Examination of the whole transcript of the proceedings convinces one that Judge Collins, while perhaps having made an unfortunate remark, particularly so because it can be taken out of context, was in the course of the proceedings fair and lenient to the person who was before him. He made the remark in the course of a lecture while imposing a suspended sentence. The case was discussed with the Department of Justice of Ontario and also with Chief Judge Collin Bennett of Ontario, and we are satisfied that no further action needs to be taken at this time.

Mr. Alexander: Although the Minister of Justice seems to think that these are unrelated instances, in my opinion, and I say this with all due respect, they are both similar in that derogatory remarks were directed against individuals. Would the minister be prepared to table all correspondence and other material related to the investigation? Further, would he be prepared to bring the matter to the attention of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in order that it can look into it?