

Oral Questions

● (1430)

[English]

Mr. Nickerson: I must say, Madam Speaker, I find that an eminently sensible reply, considering where it came from. I would like to address my supplementary question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

At that Circumpolar Conference, the spokesman for the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada said that in his opinion the outstanding land claims could be settled in about a year. I should like to know whether the minister is of the same opinion, whether he supports the position of the ITC spokesman that there should be a moratorium, and if this matter is not able to be reconciled within a year will he allow the hopes of Petro-Canada—that great hope of the Liberal party—to be jeopardized on that account?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I would advise the hon. member that the Inuit leader was quite correct in that we are going to have a negotiator appointed, probably in mid-August. That is the time the Inuit indicated they would be ready to start negotiations. This depends entirely on how well negotiations go. I sense that both parties want a settlement quickly, so that augurs well for settlement within a year.

As I responded to the hon. member before, there has been—this deals with the latter part of the hon. member's question—absolutely no decision on creating a moratorium in the north at this time. I informed the hon. member of that earlier.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**DREE GRANTS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and I have given him notice. Will he confirm that New Brunswick will receive \$10 million to \$15 million less than anticipated from DREE for development programs, and that he has so informed the Premier of New Brunswick?

Is it possible that these funds be reallocated so that the thrust of the good work DREE does in New Brunswick is not diminished?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I have read Mr. Hatfield's statement and I think that essentially he is asking that the budget of my department be substantially increased. I concur of course with Mr. Hatfield's appeal. On the other hand, the budget of my department earmarked for New Brunswick this year will indeed be lower than last year. I think it will be about \$50 million. It will be lower, it is true, but I would remind the hon. member that I am operating under a budget set up by the previous government which deemed it advisable to reduce it.

[English]

Mr. Howie: Madam Speaker, I agree with the minister that his department is badly underfunded, and I hope he instituted remedial measures on taking office several months ago. Can the minister assure me, where DREE is obviously underfunded, that DREE funds will not be used for projects other departments should be undertaking, like the Toronto waterfront development, railway relocations and extensions of transportation facilities?

May I repeat my question? I am sorry I went too fast. Can the minister assure me that where, as he has indicated, DREE is obviously underfunded, DREE funds will not be used for projects which are really the obligation of other departments, like transport facility extensions, the Toronto waterfront development, railway relocations and things of that nature?

[Translation]

Mr. De Bané: Madam Speaker, naturally, as a matter of principle, I do not finance projects that can be undertaken by other departments. However, it often happens that with the help of DREE some projects can be completed much more quickly than if they had been left entirely to the sole resources of other departments. So, in that sense, we sometimes finance operations jointly with other departments. Still, as the Prime Minister pointed out during the throne speech debate, the policy of our department is to make sure that all Canadians have bread before some of them have cake.

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*[English]***INDUSTRY, TRADE AND COMMERCE****VENICE SUMMIT—REQUEST PRIME MINISTER MAKE STATEMENT ON MOTIONS—ENERGY NEGOTIATIONS**

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have some questions regarding the Prime Minister's timetable. I wonder whether the Prime Minister could tell us when he expects to make a statement on motions in this House on the results of the bilateral and multilateral discussions he had in Venice.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I had not intended making a statement, Madam Speaker, and I thought the Leader of the Opposition's office had been advised to that effect. My willingness to answer questions on the subject, of course, is as great as it ever was.

Mr. Clark: That, Madam Speaker, is precisely what troubles us. I find it unacceptable that the Prime Minister should come back to a Parliament which is sitting, after being involved in discussions of great import to the country, and refuse to come before us with a statement on motions. I hope he will reconsider.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!