

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: No, no.

The Speaker: Order. I thank hon. members for the advice they are giving me, but I will make up my mind. The question is hypothetical. Perhaps the hon. member could go on to his final supplementary.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, the only way to ensure that any question on Quebec sovereignty is put to Quebec electors in the form that the Prime Minister desires is for a federalist government to put the question.

Is the Prime Minister therefore suggesting that his government or the current Quebec government should put the question, Canada or separation, to Quebecers in a referendum perhaps in conjunction with the next provincial election?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): I think, Mr. Speaker, this question is a bit more suitable than the previous one.

The best way for Quebecers to have economic stability and to make sure that the rest of the country does not pay a price for political instability, is for the Quebec people to vote for the Liberal Party in the next provincial election so that we will dispose of the problem. This is the best option.

• (1430)

As for Mr. Parizeau, I hope he will never form a government. However, if he were to form a government, he should take the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and not try to cheat but be very honest and tell Quebecers, as the Leader of the Opposition said to the people in Washington, that they are separatists. If they say so, the Quebec people will remain in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, work was continuing this morning in "The Pines" in Oka, in spite of the fact that this action had been declared illegal by Minister Sirros of the Quebec government. Tension has just risen one notch in Oka.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the government has instructed lawyer Michel Robert to make the stopping of illegal work in The Pines a precondition to any negotiations?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if indeed work is continuing at this time, I think Minister Sirros stated clearly the law was to be enforced and that is also our position.

As for lawyer Michel Robert and Justice Paul, they have been instructed to undertake negotiations as soon as possible. Only, for negotiations to be held, all the parties must be at the table.

And I hope that everyone will agree that it is in the interest of all concerned to sit around the table and look for a solution to this problem.

In any case, the Oka territory is not a reserve under federal jurisdiction; it falls under provincial jurisdiction. If the law is broken, it is up to the Attorney General and the provincial police to take the necessary steps.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, Chief Jerry Peltier made payment of the \$3 million demanded from the government by his group in December 1993 a precondition of any discussion with the government's negotiator.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does the government intend to respond positively to this demand for \$3 million, since its negotiator has referred the matter directly to it?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. What we have on the table is the expansion of the cemetery, approximately doubling the size. We have agreed to do this with the town of Oka.

We have people in there now working with Mr. Peltier on restructuring the debt. He inherited \$600,000 to \$700,000 of legal bills through different hearings of cases that took place in the past. Some he incurred but I think he inherited the bulk.

We have agreed on the seignior, that we would discuss a structure, the solution to which would not be implemented until long after we are gone from the House of Commons because it is a long process. We are talking about housing north of 344, not south of 344. That is independent and I expressed that to my friend over there this morning.

We are talking about a committee to work on housing with four from the membership, three appointed by the council, and some money for renovations. We are definitely not prepared to put up \$3 million. I said that in the scrum this morning and I will say that today. That is not on the table.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

On May 11 the minister said there was no money remaining for the highway 416 expansion. Yet two days later he reversed his position and committed approximately \$60 million to the project.

While most would agree with improving highway 416, all infrastructure funds have already been allocated in Ontario. Where is the additional \$60 million coming from?