

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Last Thursday the Supreme Court ruled that the aboriginal peoples have the right to fish in areas not specifically stated in treaties. The Woodstock Maliceet Band in New Brunswick currently has a case in specific claims which was to be settled, that is, until the dollar amount became known. The Department Indian Affairs and Northern Development then changed its position.

In light of the Sparrow ruling of last Thursday, will the minister now recognize that the band had a right to the resources of the fiddleheads and fishes of the Saint John River area and assure the Maliceet that they will be duly compensated for the loss of these resources?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court decision of last Thursday in the matter of Sparrow versus the Crown has indeed a major significance for the question of aboriginal rights, and the settlement of aboriginal claims in the future of our nation.

We are studying this finding very carefully. It has significant implications. The court sought to offer guidance in the conduct of our negotiations of specific and comprehensive claims but specifically to provide guidance in the matters which were brought to the Supreme Court under appeal. Given that they have been referred to retrial, it would not be appropriate to speculate on the specific application of the Supreme Court decision to this or other cases.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, that answer is simply not satisfactory. The facts of this case are very well known.

My supplementary question is for the minister. The two recent Supreme Court rulings in favour of Conrad Sioui and Ronald Sparrow insure that aboriginal rights will be upheld. That is very clear. I therefore urge the minister and his department to act now, in a timely and just manner, to settle the Woodstock band's long outstanding validated claim and not force this band to have

to go to court, because the minister and the department know they do not have the resources to take it to court.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I do not propose, here in the House of Commons, to intercede in matters which are the subject of negotiation under our specific claims policy. I think it is important that all members recognize the guidance that was given by the Supreme Court of Canada in the carrying out of this government's commitment to resolve claims, both comprehensive and specific, in accordance with the provisions of Section 35(1) of the Constitution of Canada which guarantees aboriginal rights.

Ms. Blondin: You just don't want to settle it, that's all.

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ROUTE CANADA

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. I want to refer him back again to the affair of CN Trucking and the "Road Warrior", the other name by which Mr. Ruhland is known.

According to information from Canadian National officials, at least two credit checks were ordered on the buyers, including at least one of them initiated by the cabinet. The government had to know that it was jeopardizing the fate of the company and of the latest 1,900 employees to be terminated, and yet it did nothing to keep a watching brief on the affairs of this company despite the fact that it knew its track record.

What will the minister do to assure Canadians that such fire sales—nothing down and nothing later—of Crown assets will not happen again in the future? Will he assure the latest 1,900 workers who have lost their jobs that they will not have to pay the price of his government's fiscal mismanagement and bad business deals? Will he launch an immediate inquiry to assure that no more "Road Warriors" become highwaymen?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. friend that when we have been directly involved in privatization of Crown assets we have done reasonably well.

This was a subsidiary of CN which was losing some \$30 million to \$40 million a year. It was sold to a group of