

Oral Questions

Speaker, I do not have to stand for such lecturing from the hon. member when it comes to defending Canadian farmers.

What my colleague and hon. members ought to know is that there already exists a minimum access to the Canadian market, roughly 2.5 or 2.7 per cent. The agricultural community now recognizes that we can no longer bar access to such sectors as butter, and that we must open up something like 1 to 1.5 per cent of our market. Mr. Speaker, we are in the position of a claimant. We are hoping for an article XI which would provide good protection for our marketing boards and prevent situations such as we experienced last year in the case of yogurt and ice cream. What we need, Mr. Speaker, is a supply management system which effectively protects dairy producers, not a system which might deteriorate from week to week. That is what we advocate, Mr. Speaker, a consistent position which will protect Canadian agricultural producers for years to come.

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[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Aboriginal people in this country have received a lot of promises and many of those promises were made during the Oka crisis. However, now that the guns have been dropped, the barricades are down and the cameras gone, this government has fallen silent. I remind the Prime Minister that during the crisis he said that would develop, and I quote, "programs and policies that will bring a much greater degree of social justice and fairness to the native peoples across Canada". The Prime Minister is also committed to speed up land claims, to improve economic and social conditions.

What specifically has the Prime Minister done to see that land claims progress more quickly? What specifically has he done to ameliorate the social and economic conditions for aboriginal people across this country since that promise?

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the hon. member has reminded us of the commitments that we made to the

aboriginal people on September 25. We are proceeding in a co-ordinated fashion to realize some of those commitments.

• (1430)

It takes a lot of time to reverse a trend that has been occurring in the country over the century. The Prime Minister's commitment is the most broadly based, most sweeping, and most deeply penetrating commitment of its kind in the past century. We are progressing as well as can be expected, but we will be glad to advise the hon. member of our progress as we go along.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. I regret, and the aboriginal peoples of Canada I am sure regret, that the Prime Minister will not stand in the House today and answer for his own promises.

I say to the Prime Minister, we have had a number of reviews, including the Penner report, the Coolican report, and the La Forme report on land claims. There have been many reports in the House on aboriginal conditions. The government has been in power six years. It has had six years to put into place a plan to deal with aboriginal issues.

I have made proposals, particularly around the land claims issue, one of them being an aboriginal land claims commission. Will the Prime Minister consider that proposal, and consider a system really to deal with land claims across the country? Will he consider an aboriginal land claims commission?

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to consider all these options. In fact, that is exactly what is happening. If the hon. member would listen for a moment, she would hear what we have been saying all the way along, that we are looking at co-ordinated, appropriate ways of dealing with these issues. When we have the answers, we will be very pleased to present them to the hon. member in the House.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. I would remind the government that there are many people who have proposed the answers and most of all the aboriginal peoples of the country who should be consulted. He and the government should be listening to the answers that they have proposed.