

Oral Questions

lawyers to sue the Government of Quebec and pursue their land claims in Quebec. The Government of Canada doesn't want to give more than \$130,000. Could the Minister confirm that his department agreed to pay the Algonquins of Lac Barrière \$130,000 to take the Government of Quebec to court on land claims?

[English]

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is ill informed on some of the aspects of this matter.

The Algonquin bands of western Quebec of which there are some nine have been seeking to have a land claim recognized for negotiation by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We have committed to a small number of those bands close to \$500,000 in the preparation of research on which the department would base a decision as to whether or not to negotiate the claim.

We believe that work is all but complete and, with the expenditure of another \$130,000 to look into matters relating to current use of those lands, we believe we will be in a position to accept the land claim for negotiation soon.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, doesn't the minister realize that by contributing such large sums of money he becomes part of the current conspiracy against Quebec, and that the province certainly does not deserve to get this kind of treatment from the federal government?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the suggestion is incredible.

[English]

In fact the Government of Canada is committed to the negotiation and settlement of land claims in all parts of Canada where we can be persuaded that there is a legitimate claim.

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AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, some farmers are very concerned about the results of the current GATT negotiations.

Yesterday I met with representatives of several supply management organizations, all of whom expressed their support for Canada's proposals for strengthening and clarifying article XI of GATT. They are concerned that Canada will be forced to abandon its firm stand on article XI in order to reach a compromise between all parties.

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Can the minister assure this House of his commitment to a strengthened and clarified article XI?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is appropriate because at this time there are unjustified fears.

The Government of Canada developed its position at GATT with the stakeholders, with the farmers and with the producers. That position is to maintain, to strengthen and to clarify article XI. That means that Canada, the government along with the producers, will maintain that position on supply management throughout the negotiations. We have stated that before.

I have stated that not only has Canada said we would maintain it. I have actively been promoting the position of clarification and strengthening of article XI wherever I have had the opportunity to meet members of GATT.

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TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, a week ago Dominion Textiles announced that it was shutting down its Hawkesbury Fiberworld plant laying off permanently another 86 workers, stating that it could no longer compete with U.S. plants because of the high dollar policy of this government.

Given that this is the second plant closure in two weeks for the same reason in my riding, how many more plants have to be closed and how many more people have to lose their jobs before this government understands the disaster that its high dollar policy is causing to my constituents and others?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member blames the ills of the textile industry in his riding on the value of the dollar. I would like to see that rationale.