

Oral Questions

decide at that time. We have no indication whatever at the present time that we can rely upon such reserves. If in decades to come this were to be the case, obviously the governments of the day would have to make that decision.

Mr. Crosbie: Sit down.

Mr. Lalonde: At the present time the Japanese have indeed entered into this agreement with Dome. It provides for a share of the production, but it does not authorize the Japanese to take it outside of Canada.

Mr. Clark: Filibuster.

Mr. Lalonde: They would get that share, but it would be subjected to all the requirements of the National Energy Board and they would be obliged to sell it inside Canada under the present rules.

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THE CONSTITUTION

GRANTS TO NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST IN PARTICIPATION IN RENEWAL

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It concerns the significant amounts of money granted to native organizations throughout the country—the Indians, the Inuit and the non-status Indians—to research and to establish their position re self-government and the relationship between themselves and their trustee, the federal minister of Indian affairs, in connection with constitutional renewal. Can the minister tell the House whether a timetable was attached to these grants to ensure that the position of the native people in our country is known before very serious changes are undertaken in connection with our constitution, recognizing, of course, the very special rights of Indian people in our constitution?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, with regard to the grants to native peoples in order to prepare their position on the constitution, there is no time limit in that sense. The money is available to them. It is on a fiscal year basis. They are in receipt of the money. They are utilizing it during this fiscal year. What the situation may be next year will depend upon their submissions, their needs and their analysis by the government.

INPUT FROM NATIVE GROUPS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question must be directed to the Prime Minister, particularly having regard to the rather tight schedule given to Parliament and to other partners in confederation to make fundamental and real changes to our constitution in the context of renewed federalism. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has now told us

that the Indians have been given more money to study their position, their relationship with Canada as a nation and their relationship with Her Majesty the Queen. What sense is there in carrying on a process that might take years if it is the intention of the Prime Minister to make fundamental changes to coincide with his own time frame, which is July 1 of next year? Will Indians have some input in the process of constitutional change, or is it just going to be another hand-out to keep them appeased, to have them travel around the country enjoying themselves while the Prime Minister is going ahead to make these fundamental changes?

● (1200)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think that last part of the question was something of a slur on the Indian population inferring that they are using funds supplied so they can research their rights to travel around the country and have a good time. I do not think this shows that the hon. member is very serious in asking the question.

As far as our government's position is concerned, we have stated it very many times: we want the Indians to be involved in the constitutional process. I indicated—

An hon. Member: When? How?

Mr. Trudeau: They ask when and how, Madam Speaker. This week and next week officials and the minister will be involved in discussing this very subject with the Indians. I met the leaders of the Inuit and Indian people several months ago and I indicated that any changes directly affecting them would only be made after discussion with them. I have given the undertaking, which I am prepared to repeat, that as soon as we get the constitution home we will be prepared to consider other phases of the constitutional debate and to put the item of native rights on the agenda right then and there. I do not know if the Indians themselves will be prepared at that time to indicate in a final way what they would like to see the constitution say in respect to them, but certainly the minister and his officials are attempting to reach conclusions on that.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORT

VIA RAIL—REDUCTION OF SERVICE BETWEEN OTTAWA AND MONTREAL

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. For at least a few years now there have been two Via Rail trains departing from Ottawa to Montreal daily, late in the afternoon, and these trains have always been very well patronized. It was not uncommon to see passengers standing up. On October 1, Via Rail suppressed these two departures to replace them with one departure at 1730. Could the minister explain to us the reasons for this service reduction?