

Oral Questions

tion that the provinces concerned, Alberta in particular, will be taking a certain proportion of the revenues into their general revenue and therefore this will be subject to equalization, or does it mean that if Alberta chooses to do so all this revenue can be put into capital projects and hence there would be no equalization payments? Was there at least some understanding that a certain proportion of the money Alberta gets will go into its general revenues?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. I can say it was discussed at length both at the general meeting and at the private meeting I had with the premier of Alberta. Indeed, the same question arose with the premier of Saskatchewan. The reason we gave the figure of \$100 million is that it was based on an understanding we had as to what the premier of Alberta and the premier of Saskatchewan would do with their funds. I cannot, of course, speak for them with any authority, but both of them did give me enough facts that we were able to calculate this \$100 million minimum. It is based, as the Leader of the Opposition suggested, on the knowledge we have of what Alberta intends to leave as a minimum in general revenues as opposed to a capital fund.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance of this matter. Does this mean that if the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan decided to put all their receipts into capital projects there would be no additional equalization payments arising from this agreement of last Wednesday?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, stated hypothetically, of course this is correct, but these are not the facts as they exist. If they did that, the Leader of the Opposition would be correct, but they have assured us they will not do that. I think that is the fairest and clearest way of stating it, but I could carry on the discussion if the Leader of the Opposition wishes.

Mr. Stanfield: What I am really asking is, is there an understanding that Alberta is going to put a certain proportion into general revenues, or is it simply left to Alberta to do whatever it chooses?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have Alberta's word that it will do as I state, leaving a certain—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Well, I don't know why hon. members are laughing, Mr. Speaker. This was a gentlemen's meeting, and we do not propose to legislate any obligation on Alberta. We could, of course, if that is the course the Tories opposite want us to take.

An hon. Member: Oh, no.

Mr. Bell: It was the NDP that said that.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Don't be nonsensical.

An hon. Member: No one here suggested that. That comment did not come from us.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in respect of the matter of oil and following the questions of the Leader of the Opposition, perhaps I could speak on a question of privilege in order to clarify a point. The answers the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources gave to the questions posed by the Leader of the Opposition have caused me to want to make a clarification, particularly when looking back at the statement I made yesterday in the House on the average price of crude. I realize this is pretty complicated and technical, but I want to make sure that the effect of it is understood.

Mr. Fairweather: The technical part is anybody's guess.

Mr. Trudeau: Of course, if the hon. member for Fundy-Royal is not interested I will give that directly to the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Go home and sulk, Pierre.

An hon. Member: Friday morning!

An hon. Member: Don't be insulted.

Mr. Trudeau: I was not insulted, I was trying to be helpful.

Mr. Fairweather: I have never seen a thinner skin in my life.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

AUDITING OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO INDIANS FOR DEFENCE
IN JAMES BAY CASE—REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Will he advise the House whether his department has already audited the books of the Indians of Quebec Association, and their lawyers, as is claimed by the president of that association and, if so, will the minister make any such data public immediately to clear up any possible misunderstanding that the \$1 million allocated to their defence in the James Bay case has gone chiefly toward legal fees?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, civil servants of the department have been in contact with the Quebec Indians Association for months.

I understand that the assistant deputy minister wrote to the association on January 7, or thereabouts, requesting additional information but that he has had no reply. In any event, the matter is before the committee. To my mind, its members can really help clarify the matter. As for me, I have not intervened in the debate recently. This is the information I was given this morning.