

*Inquiries of the Ministry***INDIAN AFFAIRS**

POSSIBILITY OF PLEBISCITE TO DECIDE
WISHES OF INDIANS RESPECTING
JURISDICTION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): My question arises out of a statement made by the Minister of Indian Affairs. It was complete and comprehensive and I am sure it will be appreciated by members of the house and by the country as well. However, there is one matter I should like to draw to his attention, namely, the extremely strong opposition which many Indians have to the idea that jurisdiction over them, or the responsibility for providing services to them, be turned over to the provinces. This feeling seems widespread.

In view of their strong disapproval to being subject to nine different concepts across Canada, in addition to the federal authority, would the minister consider making available to each of the Indian tribes across Canada a plebiscite on whether or not they desire to be under provincial jurisdiction in their particular provinces?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I said today that I intended to consult the Indians and the provinces with regard to this policy, and I shall do so. When I said that the provinces would extend their services to Indians, I did so because the Indians are citizens of a province, in the same way as they are citizens of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am asking whether or not the objection of Indians to being under provincial jurisdiction in any way will be respected? I think that by and large what he has produced will bring about a distinct improvement in Indian affairs, and I pass on the suggestion I have just made by way of a question in order to be helpful.

Since he has opened up this subject, I ask him now whether or not the government has decided to place before parliament any amendments to the law, any changes in the legislation so that Indian treaties which were made prior to 1867 will become part of the law of the land, rather than unrespected arrangements sacredly entered into between the Crown and the Indian tribes?

Mr. Chrétien: I said in the statement I made earlier that the government intends to respect the treaties which the Crown has signed with the Indians in the past.

[Mr. Jamieson.]

[Translation]

LABOUR RELATIONS

DISPUTE IN QUEBEC—LABRADOR IRON ORE
INDUSTRY

Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour.

The employees of the Iron Ore Company on the north shore and in the province of Newfoundland have been on strike for a long time and they have asked the federal Minister of Labour to act as mediator, subject to the agreement of the governments of Quebec and Newfoundland. We were informed last week that the government of Quebec was agreeable to an intervention by the federal Minister of Labour. Could the minister tell us whether he has approached the government of Newfoundland in order to obtain authorization to intervene in the dispute?

[English]

Hon. Bryce S. Mackasey (Minister of Labour): As I mentioned Monday, Mr. Speaker, the suggestion was made that the federal government and the provinces of Newfoundland and Quebec try to solve on a joint basis the problem the Iron Ore Company is having with its employees in northern Quebec. The province of Quebec has expressed willingness; the province of Newfoundland has asked for a little more time to go into the arrangements. But progress has been made. Yesterday I received the first conciliation board report from the board set up to deal with the maintenance of way employees in federal jurisdiction, which I promptly sent back because I thought the report was not as complete as it should be.

WATER RESOURCES

POLLUTION OF CANADA-U.S. BOUNDARY
WATERS

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and arises from the reports of serious pollution of the Rhine River and the implications this has for Canada in relation to international and interprovincial waters. Is the government taking any special action to prevent a similar accident occurring in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in so far as this matter could concern Canada, the action that we propose to take will be demonstrated in the Canada water act.