

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether he has received replies from all the provinces to his request that family allowance payments should not be charged against social assistance payments?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, I have not, Mr. Speaker.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—SUGGESTED ENLARGEMENT OF COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Does he intend to expand the number of people on the recently created three-man committee to work out a framework for discussion of the future development of the James Bay region in order that a member of the James Bay Indian community may take part in all decisions that will affect the native population in the area?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the way in which the hon. member phrased his question does not do justice to the situation. This is not a negotiating committee, but only a group of officials who will meet in order to establish a procedure for everyone to sit at the same table and find a solution.

I talked with the president of the Association of Indians of Quebec yesterday and their lawyer and they are quite happy with these developments.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the hon. member for Oxford on a supplementary, but it is my duty at this point to bring to the attention of hon. members that there are perhaps fewer than ten minutes before the end of the question period and at least 20 members are rising to ask questions. We will have to attempt to limit the number of supplementaries because again today many members, particularly in the back rows, will not be given an opportunity to ask questions, and it seems to me that this happens too often from day to day.

Mr. Nesbitt: This is only a brief supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister give the House the assurance that the views of the Indian and Eskimo people who live in the area will be given every consideration when this committee is set up, and also in regard to the functions which it will perform?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Of course, Mr. Speaker, and this is why I dealt with it myself. It was at the request of the Indians and Eskimos of northern Quebec that I went to meet Premier Bourassa last week.

[Mr. Marshall.]

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO ASSURE INDIANS RIGHT TO LEGAL COUNSEL IN CRIMINAL CASES

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. In view of the large number of Indians in penal institutions in relation to their percentage of the population, and in view of the convention held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, last weekend at which it was indicated that a good number of them are not aware of their rights in regard to legal counsel and criminal court procedures, will the minister consider amending the Criminal Code to assure them the right to counsel in criminal cases?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the question of possible amendments to the Criminal Code is, of course, in the hands of researchers within the Law Reform Commission as well as within the department, and particular improvements are under consideration. More immediately, there are moves afoot to improve legal aid approaches across the country, which is the most effective way of assuring legal assistance to people who need it.

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POLLUTION

OTTAWA RIVER—REQUEST FOR ACTION TO REMEDY SITUATION

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment. Has the minister noticed the massive pollution that is floating by on top of the Ottawa River only 100 yards from where we are sitting at this moment, and when may the country expect that this once beautiful river will be cleaned up?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member has seen the announcement that the federal government is buying out the mills on the other side of the river and that they will be shut down shortly.

Mr. Hees: I point out that the pollution to which I am referring comes from higher up the river; it is massive, and it is there for everybody to see. Will the minister please do something about it?

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FISHERIES

ICNAF ANNUAL MEETING—REACTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO CANADIAN PROPOSALS

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries. Has the minister been in touch with our representatives at the twenty-second annual meeting of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries in Washington and, if so, when will he be in a position to report to the House on