

Inquiries of the Ministry

than half the country is involved, will the minister give serious consideration to preparing terms of reference under the appropriate section of the Supreme Court Act so that this illegal procedure on the part of so many provinces can be challenged at the earliest possible date?

Mr. Trudeau: Indecision and delay.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Acting Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I will be very glad to take that question as notice.

Mr. Baldwin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to respond to the proved master of indecision and delay who sits opposite me.

Mr. Trudeau: Not quite, yet. The hon. member will have to move over one seat. He is not leader yet.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I trust that I may now be permitted to ask my question. Will the minister give consideration to the proposal which I advanced to the Minister of Agriculture a few days ago that the government appoint counsel to appear in the constitutional case now taking place in the province of Quebec involving the extent to which the regulations of that province contravene section 121 of the British North America Act?

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, as to the premise preceding the formal part of the question, I want to make it very clear that I not only cannot accept it but that I deplore such language being used in these circumstances—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McIlraith: —by an official spokesman for the official opposition in the House. As to the question itself, I will be very glad to look into the matter.

Mr. Baldwin: What does the minister deplore? What have I done?

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INDIAN AFFAIRS**STERILIZATION OF ESKIMO WOMEN**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on a rather serious matter. Is the minister aware that a program of sterilization of native Eskimo women was apparently introduced in the Holman Island community on Victoria Island, that five women have been so sterilized and that some others are being considered? If he is aware, will he inform the House who authorized this unnecessary and inhuman program, in view of the availability of birth control methods?

[Mr. Baldwin.]

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I have no information on this problem. The hon. member was kind enough to give me notice of his question, so I have had an investigation made but I have not yet received any report.

I am not aware that any authorization was given by my department. Health services in the Northwest Territories are under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Health and Welfare. I therefore asked one of my department's officers this morning to get in touch immediately with the representatives of the Department of National Health in order to determine whether any authorization had actually been given or whether the facts alleged by my hon. friend were correct.

As soon as I obtain further information, I shall be happy to inform the House, but, at this time, I do not believe that such an authorization was given. If such action took place it must have been because of some local or individual initiative, rather than under a government policy.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I want to put a supplementary question to the minister and express my appreciation for his announcement.

It is not possible that such a program should be implemented without any authorization. I should like to ask the minister to draw the attention of the Minister of National Health and Social Welfare to this question and the program I just mentioned.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, it was done this morning.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Malpeque.

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GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION**LACK OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Is the indication in *Hansard* that the services of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence have been terminated in that capacity and that as yet no replacement has been appointed correct? Second, when will this omission be rectified?

Mr. Stanfield: Can they not find anybody to work with him?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is provision in the law for the appointment of only 16 Parliamentary Secretaries. I recognize the matter