

Oral Questions

and under which the Federal Government would be spending the \$170 million, at least partly, through the municipalities and according to priorities determined by the municipalities. We regret this, but we are firmly resolved to see that the \$170 million is spent in the Province of Quebec just the same. However, it will not be in co-operation with municipalities and that is unfortunate. We shall find ways to spend these funds usefully, in the federal public sector and certainly in the private sector in the Province of Quebec, in order to stimulate economic recovery and create jobs in that province.

REQUEST THAT PROVINCIAL JURISDICTIONS BE RESPECTED

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary. I am very pleased to hear the Prime Minister's assurances that the people of Quebec will get the \$170 million, because they need it. Yesterday, the Prime Minister said, in answer to a question by the Member for Beauharnois-Salaberry, that in cases where agreement could be reached with a province or provinces, he intended to subsidize municipalities directly. The Quebec Minister of Municipal Affairs seems prepared to spend the funds to be provided by Quebec under the NEED programs for municipalities, since they come under his jurisdiction. Has the Prime Minister, who implied that the Federal Government had decided to subsidize municipalities directly, now decided to respect provincial jurisdictions?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, in his first question, the Member for Joliette seemed to be showing a great deal of flexibility, because he was particularly concerned that these funds should be spent in Quebec. My answer yesterday to the Member for Valleyfield was given with the assurance I had at that time that the Péquiste Government would continue negotiations and agree to sign the agreement in question, which would allow us to provide direct assistance and to deal directly with the municipalities. Now that is no longer the case, I am not sure what the Hon. Member means by respect for provincial jurisdictions. I am sure that the other Provinces who allow us to give direct assistance to municipalities will not take any unconstitutional action, and if it is a political decision by the Péquiste Government which does not want us to deal directly with the municipalities, in any case, the Hon. Member's first question and my answer indicated that we were prepared to spend the funds in the Province of Quebec in a legal manner, but we can no longer do so in the manner I referred to yesterday.

• (1440)

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF HON. GEORGE BUSH, VICE-PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of the Vice-President of the United States of America, the Hon. George Bush.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

POSITION OF NATIVE WOMEN—WORDING OF CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. As the Minister realizes, Mr. Charlie Watt, of the Inuit Association, has added his voice to those of other native people who claim that there was a switch in the constitutional provision which would provide sexual equality for both men and women under the aboriginal clause in the Constitution. Mr. Watt also claims that the reason for the switch is that the original wording which was agreed upon by the federal Government would in fact guarantee federal benefits to thousands upon thousands of women and children in Canada, and that the new agreement will not do that. Will the Minister stand in this House and deny that there was a switch and, second, confirm that the new wording will not deny benefits to a number of non-status women and their children?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, this is the same question that I was asked the other day by a Member of the Official Opposition. The facts are exactly the same, that the agreement which was made public was the agreement that was reached by the committee. We have asked all of the Governments of Canada and all of the other groups about their recollection of the events. The Governments are unanimous that the written agreement represents the agreement that was reached in the committee. Some of the Native groups are of the same opinion.

There seems to be a genuine mistake of fact on the part of some of the native groups that the proposals they put forward were accepted when they were not. There was no debate of them and they were never accepted. That mistake in fact is unfortunate, but it remains. What we plan to do is to encourage the early discussion of this issue in the ongoing process. I understand that the Native Council of Canada is prepared to accept that solution.