

### Oral Questions

to this alleged "discriminatory feature" of the Indian Act as it applies to a status Indian woman marrying a white person and losing her status, I would do so. That option is now there for chiefs and band councils to exercise, if they so wish.

With regard to the first part of the hon. member's question as to when we are going to attack the whole question of the discriminatory section of the Indian Act, may I indicate, as the Prime Minister did earlier, that we wish to give ample opportunity to the Indian people to consult and let us know when they will be ready, within a reasonable time, for us to deal with this aspect of the alleged discrimination, mainly because it involves complex questions dealing with membership, as the hon. member knows. Certainly the Indian community is well aware of the constitutional resolution now before the House. After the three-year period involved, we will automatically do away with the discriminatory feature in the Indian Act.

**Mr. Manly:** The Canadian government in its response to the United Nations specifically said that it hoped this legislation would be prepared and tabled in the House by mid-1981. What process of consultation is being followed now with Indian organizations so that this legislation will represent their views, specifically organizations which represent Indian women?

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the constitutional resolution now before the House includes a clause which will do away with discrimination based on sex. That clause is to be operative three years hence, giving the provinces time to gear up their legislation to deal with the rationale for that. The Indian people have had the constitutional resolution before them for months. They have made appearances before the constitutional committee. They are well aware there will be a law entrenched doing away with discrimination of this kind, to be effective three years from now. Therefore, they have been richly consulted with regard to that aspect of the resolution.

Innumerable Indian organizations appeared before the constitutional committee to give their views on this particular section and on the whole Constitution. This consultative process has been open to them. They are aware of the section. They have been aware of the parliamentary committee where they can make all sorts of representations with respect to it. One need only read the record of the constitutional committee's proceedings to see the tremendous availability for consultation there has been.

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### NATIONAL CAPITAL

#### DELAY RESPECTING RIDEAU CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the very popular Minister of Public Works in his capacity as minister responsible for the National Capital Commission. It deals with the long awaited and much needed Rideau Centre development in my riding.

My question is prompted by several comments made by developers, contractors, suppliers, and citizens concerning press reports that the Rideau Centre development has been put off once more. Can the minister confirm that there will not be a loss of \$5 million per month as reported in the press? Can he advise whether there is any truth to the fact that the lawyers representing the developer, Viking Rideau and a hotel, Western International, are having difficulty reaching agreement, and that is basically the reason why it is being delayed?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to respond to the question of the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier. I want to express my optimism that although there have been additional delays on the project, I remain confident that the problems are temporary and the project will go ahead. We feel very positive about the project. For example, the announcement of this project with the convention centre has encouraged other developments in the city of Ottawa. It will be good not only for the city, but the region generally. In direct response to the question, the newspaper reports are accurate. There are some legal difficulties between the major parties involved, the developer and the hotel, and the federal government, at the request of the major developer, changing the program from a lease to a sale has encountered some delay in legal implementation as well. Hopefully it will proceed.

● (1500)

**Madam Speaker:** Some answers to questions today were quite long, and justifiably so. I did not think it in the interest of the House to intervene, but the House will probably agree that I should extend the question period for a while.

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### HOUSING

#### STEPS TO ALLEVIATE SHORTAGE ON EAST COAST

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works, who is responsible for housing. The vacancy rate for rental housing in St. John's, Newfoundland, is down to 2.5 per cent and now equals the national rate. Housing starts are down over 10 per cent on the east coast, which is greater than the national average. Mortgage interest rates are up 5 per cent. This puts great financial pressure on renters on the east coast and across Canada. There are three million of them.

We have heard about MURBs, which are not successful in the long-term. We have heard about social housing, which is not proceeding in Nova Scotia. What more can the minister tell us about what he will do for the east coast? Let us remember that much of what he has told us is about provincial initiatives such as those in the province of Ontario. Will the minister tell us what the federal government will do for the east coast?