

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Winch:** I think the minister will understand the importance of one question. He will admit, I think, it is most extraordinary that the government of Canada should recommend for a position of this importance a man from the Department of Trade and Commerce instead of from the Department of External Affairs.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would confirm the judgment of the government. Mr. Roberts has had outstanding experience in matters having to do with international affairs. There are few men in this country who have had as wide a contact with as many countries as he has had during the past four or five years.

**NORTHERN AFFAIRS****QUEBEC—ADMINISTRATION OF ESKIMO AFFAIRS**

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Is there any truth to the statement made yesterday by Quebec natural resources minister René Lévesque to the effect that the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources systematically blocks the negotiations with Quebec concerning the transfer of jurisdiction over the Eskimos of new Quebec?

[*Text*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Under the rules given to me a question should not inquire whether statements made in a newspaper are correct.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Without any reference to the newspaper article, I should like to ask a question of the right hon. Prime Minister. Now that negotiations between Ottawa and Quebec concerning the transfer of Eskimo affairs to the province of Quebec have been broken off, does the Prime Minister intend to appoint another negotiator with whom it will be possible for the province to discuss?

[*Text*]

**Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister):** Negotiations are continuing.

**Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources):** I think yesterday Hon. Mr. Lévesque sought and obtained from his legislature permission to make an

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

extended reply to a question asked by Mr. Daniel Johnson. An assertion of bad faith has apparently been made and that is important to me. Further I think this question is of sufficient importance to this house and to the public, for me to seek the indulgence of hon. members to make a somewhat extended reply, if I may.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the house give consent to the minister's suggestion?

**Mr. Knowles:** In view of the fact that this is Wednesday, when questions are limited to half an hour, should not any time taken up by a statement which is, in effect, a statement on motions, be made outside that 30 minute limit?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Grégoire:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Prime Minister tell us that there has been no breaking off of negotiations between Ottawa and Quebec on the transfer of control of the Eskimo affair, and that Mr. René Lévesque made an erroneous statement on that matter?

[*Text*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the house give unanimous consent to the minister making this statement?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Perhaps by unanimous consent we could revert to motions so the statement would not impinge on time allowed for questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it agreed that the house should now revert to motions?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Laing:** I have not yet seen the text of the remarks attributed to Hon. René Lévesque in the Quebec legislature yesterday on the subject of the Eskimos in Quebec. Neither have I received any communication from Mr. Lévesque in connection with his reported statement that further negotiations looking toward a transfer of the administration of services to Eskimos in Quebec were pointless at this time.

It is the policy of this government to enable the indigenous people of Canada to take advantage of the programs and services enjoyed by all other Canadians. I believe that to achieve our policy the federal government and the provinces must share responsibility and find ways to work together. We were pleased to agree to the request of the province of Quebec for negotiations.