

Supply

together. I just wanted to say that I appreciate his comments.

Back to the matter of business. I have a couple of very specific concerns. One has to do with the Métis agenda. Following the 1985 First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters, the federal government developed a policy to enter into tripartite self-government negotiations with provincial governments and the Métis.

• (1845)

To date, there have been no self-government agreements concluded. No agreements in principle have been reached. No major policy changes affecting Métis people have been adopted. Currently there are six sets of negotiations being conducted. These are in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

While little is known about the federal policy framework, we do know that federal officials refuse to deal squarely with Métis land claims. They have indicated that land can be considered under economic development. What this means in practice is a mystery to the Métis.

I would like an update on what has been happening with the Métis interlocutor and the Federal-Provincial Relations Office. What is the current state of affairs with regard to any kind of constitutional recognition for the Métis people?

Having said that I know I will not get a chance for another question, but I have another one which deals with the Inuvialuit.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has an agreement with the Inuvialuit that it would clean up the Horton River site which is a DEW Line site. There are approximately 5,000 to 10,000 abandoned fuel drums scattered along the beach. In the vicinity of the site, on-site buildings, pipelines, fuel tanks and a large conveyer must be demolished and disposed of off site. As well, landfills used by the DEW Line must be cleaned and capped with gravel. Since the site is very difficult to access and since the terrain around it is very rugged the clean-up will be very difficult and costly.

I have spoken with the officials of the Inuvialuit. Mr. Gruben has provided me with a briefing done by his staff. I am very thankful for that because we would like to know what exactly the government is going to do with respect to the time line of the clean-up. It has agreed that this would provide employment as well as business and training opportunities in a very depressed economy. It has agreed that the Horton River clean-up will be done. However, the disagreement is on—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order please. That might be a pretty good question to put on the Order Paper. The minister would have a better opportunity to answer. I will allow him to answer at least part of it.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Western Arctic will understand if I do not give detailed answers.

On the first question about Métis and the recognition of Métis rights and claims, I think she knows that the minister for intergovernmental affairs has been given that responsibility as interlocutor for the Métis people.

The federal government has always wished to provide a proper recognition of the Métis people. They are in a category different from those of other than North American aboriginal descent and those who are full aboriginal. They are unique.

In the constitutional discussions, it was recognized that that uniqueness of the Métis people should be recognized and reflected in our Constitution. The recognition under section 91(24) should be accorded. With the failure of the Charlottetown accord or at least that stage of the process, that question remains to be resolved.

Meanwhile it is our view that where federal government dollars are transferred to provinces for health and welfare and educational purposes off reserves, provinces then have a responsibility to provide adequate programs for the benefit of Métis people.

Some provinces, for example the province of Alberta, have been quite generous in setting land aside and creating new communities for Métis people. I would not want to call them reserves because as I was saying in my remarks, a very unfortunate stigma goes with that.