

Oral Questions

band-aids and aspirin, which many seniors take to prevent heart attacks?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, to me social justice means helping people who really need it and this is what our government is doing with the GST. We want to share the tax revenue and seniors will be protected within this process.

Our government and myself, as Minister responsible for the rights and also for the responsibilities of older people, are working to help those in need including senior citizens.

[*English*]

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. We all know that visiting the doctor is quite expensive for our health care system. Can the minister explain the fact that according to the GST Information Office, a cane or safety bars bought with a prescription is tax-free, but if a person walks in off the street to buy the same item, the GST is charged.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. Member that essential goods will not be taxed and that purchasing power will be the same and even higher for seniors. We are listening to them and trying to help them fill their needs.

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[*English*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver yesterday the Prime Minister committed his government to resolving native land claims and to prioritizing native issues.

On November 10, the Innu of Labrador will be marching on Ottawa to advance their land claims and to protest Canada's decision to triple low level military flights over their homelands.

My question to the Prime Minister is this. Is his government prepared to extend the same commitment

to the Innu of Labrador that he extended to natives in B.C.; that is, to settle their land claim fairly and expeditiously and to deal fairly with their objections against low level military test flights.

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using statements and numbers that are not accurate, and he knows they are not accurate.

What he does know, Mr. Speaker, is that there has been a decision taken by NATO not to proceed with the NATO tactical fighter centre. He knows that. The Innu know that. We understand, as he does, that there is an overlapping claim. There already are Indian claims, the CAM group and the Labrador Inuit Association which are being addressed by my colleague.

If the Innu of Labrador would use the dollars that the Government of Canada provided to research their claim and submit that claim to the Government of Canada, I am sure the government would look at it and take action.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary to the Prime Minister.

The Lubicon people of northwestern Alberta have been waiting for over half a century for a just settlement of their legitimate land claims. All they have received is neglect at best, and wholly unreasonable take-it-or-leave-it offers at worst.

Again arising out of the Prime Minister's remarks in B.C. yesterday, when will the government give substance to the Prime Minister's words by starting to bargain in good faith with the Lubicon people? Will the government, when it does so, agree to use the Lubicons' June 1 Draft Settlement Agreement as the basis for that bargaining?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows of this government's commitment to deal with comprehensive and specific claims. Of course, we have been engaged in serious negotiation of the Lubicon claim, at least up until the time last June where that negotiation was suspended. I might remind the hon. member that a United Nations committee, looking into a grievance of the Lubicon, indicated that the federal government was taking an appropriate approach to negotiating and resolving this claim. Finally, I remind the hon. member that the Lubicon demand is vastly in excess