

view of the project's importance to economic conditions generally and particularly to the monetary situation? Would he also consider using his Canada Development Corporation, the legislation for which is now before a parliamentary committee, for the purpose of assisting this development with Canadian funds?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, before I could answer such a question I would have to know a great deal more about the project than I presently do. My knowledge is limited, as is the hon. member's, to what has been printed in the newspapers.

PROPOSED JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—RESEARCH INTO ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry who, according to the Prime Minister's roster, was scheduled to be here today—I am sure he is away for good reason—may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government, the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry or some agency of government has gone into the ecological problems involved in the James Bay development and the way in which some research might be done, as suggested by one of the members of the Quebec cabinet, I think Dr. Goldbloom, into the ecological and environmental consequences of the project?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is engaged in British Columbia in receiving the Queen and helping her see that part of our country.

As far as relations between the government of Quebec and ourselves on this matter are concerned, I believe the only contact to date was with regard to the matter of energy itself. I know there has been some involvement between the National Energy Board and provincial officials on some aspect of this matter. As far as the ecology is concerned, like the Minister of Finance I am not aware of any request having been made by the province to the federal government. I do know, as does the hon. member, that Dr. Goldbloom has indicated the interest of his government from the point of view of the ecology. Certainly the federal government will also want, in so far as it is under its jurisdiction, to involve itself in any matters relating to the ecology.

PROPOSED JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—DISCUSSION WITH QUEBEC ON DIVERSION OF WATERS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether there has been any discussion with the province of Quebec about the diversion of waters and also whether it is the intention of the government to refer this whole matter to the committee of the House chaired by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich?

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

PROPOSED JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Joliette wish to put a supplementary question?

Mr. Roch LaSalle (Joliette): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

In view of the importance of the James Bay project, could the minister at least assure the Quebec government that representations will be made to this government with regard to the issuance of special credits for the construction of the substructure required for this project?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, if the province so requests, we will doubtless study the matter carefully.

[English]

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): A supplementary question. Having regard to the example of co-ordination of government policies, my question has been partially answered by a couple of the supplementaries but from the answers of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion are we to understand that there has been no specific request, especially involving the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, in regard to this rather large project?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): No, Mr. Speaker.

PROPOSED JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF INDIANS

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in his capacity as protector of the rights of Indians. In light of the objection by Chief Maxwell Gros-Louis, Secretary of the Indian Association of Quebec, that the James Bay power project will encroach upon the territorial and aboriginal rights of the Indian people there, will the minister on behalf of the government of Canada intervene to protect the rights of the native Indian people in that area?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I have asked my officials to look into the matter and as the hon. member knows, there is a committee composed of Indians and provincial and federal officials which studies all problems pertaining to Quebec Indians, and I hope that this tripartite committee will be in a position to study the problem as quickly as possible to ensure that Indian rights are preserved.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize a last supplementary on this subject and then go to the hon. member for Témiscamingue.