

ly and there is also the federal program for student employment this summer.

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AGRICULTURE

POSSIBLE INCREASE IN COST OF FARM LOANS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. William C. Frank (Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the fact that farm credit loans recently were allowed to rise from 7 per cent to 8½ per cent, further increasing the cost of farm inputs and in turn higher consumer costs and now the prime bank rate has been allowed to rise to 8½ per cent, can the minister assure the House that the cost of farm credit loans will not further increase?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, before any interest rate is changed on Farm Credit Corporations loans it will be duly considered, that is for sure.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Lincoln and also the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster whom I meant to recognize a moment ago.

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FLOODS

POSSIBLE MEASURES TO LOWER LEVELS OF LAKES ONTARIO AND ERIE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Kenneth J. Higson (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that Mr. Cohen and Mr. Herter, co-chairmen of the International Joint Commission are of the opinion that the commission itself does not have the power to initiate studies relating to measures which might be undertaken to reduce the dangerously high water levels of lakes Ontario and Erie, but must on the other hand rely on the initiatives of the governments of Canada and the United States. Can the minister advise the House what measures are being taken or contemplated by the government to assure that the water levels are reduced to the maximum extent possible?

● (1500)

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, references have been made from time to time to the International Joint Commission jointly by Canada and the United States. I know that numerous studies have been carried out, and the International Joint Commission have advised that little can be done to affect the levels substantially. Further studies are under way.

Mr. Higson: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have almost reached the end of the question period. The hon. member for Lincoln may ask a supplementary, followed by the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster and the hon. member for

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Esquimalt-Saanich, who also has a supplementary, after which we will call orders of the day.

Mr. Higson: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. What has been the government's response to the request from the International Joint Commission's lake level board with regard to studying the feasibility of better controlling and possibly increasing the flow of water from the Great Lakes down through the St. Lawrence River?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, we have committed additional staff and moneys to carrying out these investigations.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In fairness, before I recognize the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster I should recognize the hon. member for Montreal-Bourassa.

[Translation]

POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC ON WATER LEVELS AROUND MONTREAL

Mr. Jacques-L. Trudel (Montréal-Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. Can the minister tell the House whether an agreement has recently been signed concerning the control of rising waters in the Montreal area?

[English]

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry; I did not hear the first part of the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Trudel: Mr. Speaker, may I put my question again to the minister?

Can he tell the House whether an agreement has recently been signed with the province of Quebec with regard to the control of rising waters in the Montreal area?

[English]

Mr. Davis: No, Mr. Speaker, but there are discussions going on with the province of Quebec in this connection.

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HARBOURS

SAINT JOHN, N.B.—REQUEST BY CITY FOR MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS TO ASSESS DEVELOPMENT OF PORT

Mr. Tom Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. It concerns the Atlantic area. Now that the minister's departmental officials have made an assessment of the multimillion dollar fire damage to the port of Saint John, will the minister accede to the request of the city of Saint John for a top-level meeting, hopefully attended by the minister himself, to assess the entire port development as it affects the future of that city?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am ready to meet with the mayor of the city of Saint John. I know the situation there is serious. I presume that they will get in touch with Mr. Taylor, the head of the National Harbours Board. Up to now Mr. Taylor has