

*Oral Questions*

this session to bring legislation before parliament in effect to ratify or establish policy on a long-term basis for these two programs?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member in his question did state well the government's expressed concern for these programs and the areas in which they have been working. I am afraid I cannot answer the precise question whether we will be making an announcement or taking any action at this time. Such a decision has not been made.

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**FLOODS**

**HIGH WATER LEVELS ON GREAT LAKES—POSSIBLE USE OF ARMED FORCES FOR PREVENTIVE MEASURES—NEGOTIATIONS WITH ONTARIO ON COST-SHARING**

**Mr. Terry Grier (Toronto-Lakeshore):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence or the Minister of the Environment; I am not sure which should answer. It arises from reports yesterday of continuing and increasing flood damage to property in municipalities along the Great Lakes from Windsor right through to Oshawa. Can the minister confirm to the House that the government is currently negotiating an arrangement with the province of Ontario to share the cost of Canadian forces units which would be used to assist municipalities in flood preventive measures? Can he indicate the basis of such an arrangement and whether it will assure that municipalities will be relieved of any part of the cost involved?

**Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I have been in touch with the Minister of National Defence and there has been no request for assistance from the government of Ontario.

**Mr. Grier:** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I did not hear the reply. Would the minister kindly repeat it?

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks me to repeat my reply. I have been in touch with the Minister of National Defence and, as I understand it, there has been no request for assistance by the armed forces in respect of this matter from the government of Ontario.

**Mr. Grier:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that reports in the press today attribute to the Ontario resources minister remarks to the effect that negotiations are currently under way between the governments of Ontario and Canada to make cost-sharing arrangements to cover the cost of use of the Canadian forces, can the Minister of National Defence indicate whether in fact such negotiations are taking place?

**Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, there are no current negotiations specifically with regard to cost-sharing. I have outlined the procedure before. We do operate on a cost recovery basis but we do not charge for salaries or equipment, just for out of pocket expenses.

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

**Mr. Grier:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that many municipalities would wish to take advantage of the services of the Canadian forces units, and in view of the fact these units are not being made available because the province has not requested them, will the Minister of National Defence or the Minister of the Environment take the initiative once again to consult with the government of Ontario in order to establish whether some mutually acceptable arrangement can be made in order that municipalities in Ontario can be assisted in this very important matter?

**Mr. Davis:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, we are in the closest possible consultation daily and hourly with the government of Ontario.

**HIGH WATER LEVELS ON GREAT LAKES—NATURE OF SITUATION**

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Is it the government's opinion that there is no emergency on the Great Lakes in respect of the high water situation?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member is asking for an opinion and a question in those terms is not in order. Perhaps the hon. member might like to rephrase it.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of the Environment inform the House what level the lakes would have to reach or what the government has in mind in respect of this problem on the Great Lakes?

**Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment):** As is well known, Mr. Speaker, we already face an emergency on the Great Lakes. It remains to be seen, however, as to whether it is a national emergency or a local and provincial one.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Peel South on a supplementary question, but we should then try to allow the hon. member for Témiscamingue to ask his question in order to complete the first round of questioning.

• (1440)

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Great Lakes are clearly international waters is it not a matter of national importance that these international waters be a matter of federal responsibility?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member is actually submitting an argument or representation to the minister. He has to assume that it has been noted. The hon. member for Ontario on a supplementary.