

tion. Does the parliamentary secretary have any information in respect of improving the weather forecasting system and an expansion of the program? What action is being taken to overcome this situation.

Mr. George Baker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment and Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, we have received representations from two provinces on this matter. We are attacking the problem from two fronts: Number one, a continuation and possible expanding of the special in-shore ice and storm reporting that was begun this spring and, secondly, a re-examination with the hope of increasing the number of spot coastal stations reporting to weather offices. I can also tell the hon. gentleman that we are opening a new weather office, the first one in Prince Edward Island, next month, and one is scheduled to go into the hon. gentleman's riding in western Newfoundland next spring.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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URBAN AFFAIRS

TRILEVEL CONFERENCE ON MUNICIPAL FINANCING— POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Urban Affairs. Will he indicate the present status of the proposed Montebello trilevel conference to discuss municipal financing? Is it going ahead and has the Minister of Finance given the minister any assurance that he may offer additional financing at the federal level to municipalities at the conference?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker, there have been no pre-commitments. The meeting is to discuss the first and, presumably, the only report of the trilevel task force on public financing. This will be the first time that others, other than the three chairmen, have met to discuss this matter, to develop a common data base and to exchange our views in relation to it. There are no commitments anticipated as a result of these discussions. The meetings are intended to clarify some of the concerns that each level has with reference to the report itself.

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FINANCE

ALLEGED REJECTION BY MINISTER OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID TO MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Bearing in mind that federal revenues continue to soar, will the minister confirm or otherwise his reported statement at the finance minister's conference this week that the Urban Affairs Minister may go ahead with his Montebello meeting, but the Minister of Finance hoped it was understood that there would be no federal assistance

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offered directly or indirectly to the municipalities, which could mean that the conference might well be pointless?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I made no such statement at the finance ministers' meeting. I did canvass the provincial finance ministers as to whether they proposed to attend, and whether they would like the federal finance minister to attend. The unanimous feeling was that the finance ministers should not attend the meeting.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

EFFECT ON QUADRA MANUFACTURING OF TRAIL OF ACTION BY HELLER INC.

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who I am delighted to see back in the House after some absence.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brisco: I wonder whether the minister would be good enough to familiarize himself with the conduct and ruthless business practices of the United States firm called Heller Inc., particularly in view of the fact that a DREE established industry, Quadra Manufacturing of Trail, has been driven to its knees and shut down, with a resultant 50 unemployed, by Heller Inc. of Toronto holding back nearly 50 per cent of the cash flow of this company?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am always absent from the House of Commons on July 1.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: And on December 25. I think, if possible, this question would be better directed to the Minister of Finance. If the hon. gentleman is really concerned about the problem I should think he would have sent the documentation to my department instead of waiting and trying to make capital out of it, perhaps to the detriment of the firm affected.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Brisco: Mr. Speaker, it would appear that the minister is trying to make capital of the fact that he has been absent from the House for some time. My appeal was genuine and had the minister been here I would have sent him—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.