

Oral Questions

FLOODS

PREVENTION MEASURES BY TOWN OF LUMSDEN,
SASKATCHEWAN—POSSIBILITY OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to the Prime Minister but he just got away on me. I will direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs who just became Acting Prime Minister. In view of the response to a question of mine on Tuesday by the Minister of the Environment regarding compensation for temporary works such as dykes, sandbagging, bulldozing and so forth to the effect that they would be subject to the federal formula for cost-sharing, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister if the government agrees with that answer and that in fact communities such as the town of Lumsden will be able to receive financial assistance under the federal formula?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to answer a question so precisely. Certainly the Minister of the Environment was speaking for the government and I support the statement he has made on behalf of the government. The particular question about Lumsden the hon. member has put to me now I shall have to take under consideration.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of the Environment if he has the support of his colleagues in the Cabinet and the government for his answer to my question of last Tuesday or whether the minister in charge of the Wheat Board when speaking in Regina yesterday was correct in saying as indicated in the following report?

Mr. Lang told a press conference the existing federal-provincial cost-sharing formula for disaster loss compensation does not extend to the cost of efforts to prevent the disaster.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the quotation which the hon. member puts forward. I think that in the various statements that have been made what must be appreciated is what the Acting Prime Minister just referred to, that it is difficult to make a complete statement on the situation because whatever is paid by the federal treasury under our formula depends upon the approval in the first instance of the province of payments in respect of those matters. There is a list of things which are eligible on our part, but it depends first on what the province does and at this stage there is no way of knowing precisely what the province will do. But we have a very important support formula—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain.

Mr. Lewis: A point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I apologize to the hon. member. The hon. member for York South seeks the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Lewis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The question was addressed to the Minister of the Environ-

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

ment. The Minister of Justice rose to his feet to clarify a statement which he was reported to have made. He did nothing of the sort. He added to the confusion. I think he was arrogant in rising and confusing in his remarks and that the Minister of the Environment should be given a chance to answer the question so that the citizens of Lumsden will know whether or not there is a chance for them to get some assistance.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair has no objection, of course, to allowing the minister to reply to the hon. member's question, but we are running short of time and I am wondering whether this is what hon. members want the Chair to do.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that we are both right, the Minister of Justice and myself, in respect of my answer the other day. All works which have been put in place currently or as a result of the current flood threat, as well as damages incurred as a result of the flooding, are subject to the federal formula and compensation from Ottawa. It is a fact that the province makes out the cheques and the federal government then pays the province on a matching dollar basis, the formula for which includes a threshold above which the federal contribution rises in an ascending fashion. Dikes recently put in place to deal with the flood threat, sandbagging and so on are all subject to federal support.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain. Order, please. We have reached the end of the question period. I will, of course, recognize the hon. member who is seeking the floor on a question of privilege and then the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain who has been trying to get the floor for three or four minutes. The hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is very brief. It can be simply handled by the Acting Prime Minister on behalf of all members of the House and the residents of Saskatchewan, particularly Lumsden, if he will have the Minister of Justice keep his nose out of this matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May we have order, please. I suggest to hon. members that these alleged points of order and questions of privilege are not really what they are claimed to be. They are really debate between members and a minister. Perhaps we might try to go on to the next question. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain.

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ENERGY

POSSIBLE DEFECTIVE PIPELINE AT AGASSIZ BRIDGE ON
FRASER RIVER

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Has the minister been informed by the National Energy Board about a possible