

question of cable jurisdiction and other communications matters, and I wonder if the minister is considering a full-fledged federal-provincial conference in the new year. There has not been one for several years, and there are many questions outstanding.

[Translation]

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is not well informed about the frequency of meetings of communications ministers. A meeting was held March 29 and another one is scheduled for next March.

Regarding the negotiations proposed by Quebec communications minister O'Neill, I acknowledged his proposal and I am prepared to enter into negotiations with him on a bilateral basis, as it has already been done with other provinces such as Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

[English]

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about ministerial meetings, not meetings among officials. Do I understand from the minister's answer that the minister is going to continue her Don Quixote policy of bilateral negotiations with each individual province and of not putting the whole matter of communications on one table to try to resolve the issues? Does the minister want to have separate agreements with the ten provinces?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sauvé: The memory of the hon. member is certainly failing him, because the meetings I am referring to took place at the ministerial level. As for these bilateral negotiations, I think the hon. member should understand that these are extremely complex issues, they arise in a context which varies from one province to another and must be dealt with on a bilateral basis. It would of course be desirable to reach similar agreements with all provinces. It is my objective but I am not sure I will reach it.

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[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

BELLA BELLA, BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN REPAIRING DAMAGE

Mr. Jack Pearsall (Coast Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Is the Minister aware of the economic disaster and tragedy which struck the remote village of Bella Bella on the coast of British Columbia? For the minister's information, in case he has not heard, power was lost for a week, freezing temperatures burst pipelines and a flood took place. In addition Bella Bella has just lost its hotel. Can the minister assure me that efforts will be made by his department to assist the residents of Bella Bella as they seek to rebuild and replace the buildings and facilities they have lost?

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1452)

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): What is obvious, Mr. Speaker, is that there is much more concern on this side of the House than there is on the other side respecting the disaster at Bella Bella. If they are not taking it seriously, we are.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder if I might be able to hear the minister's answer.

Mr. Faulkner: We are involved, Mr. Speaker. We have two engineers working with Chief Reid. I understand things are under control. I will be in touch with Chief Reid later on in the day, and we will be communicating with the hon. member.

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ENERGY

LOWER CHURCHILL FALLS POWER PROJECT—FEDERAL PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. His colleague, the Minister of Employment, has repeated on a number of occasions the type of projects that would provide long-term employment, for example, the lower Gull Island site in Labrador. I wonder if the minister would indicate if he has had any further discussions with the province of Newfoundland? Have there been any new proposals, and has he indeed participated in discussions between that province and the province of Quebec with regard to future developments?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Yes I have talked to the minister of mines and energy for the province of Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this particular project. I have asked him if he would put forward a proposal to me and to the federal government indicating what the priorities of the Newfoundland government are for the development of the Lower Churchill Falls site. Also how they relate to his government's priorities with respect to a settlement of the outstanding dispute with the province of Quebec. He has undertaken to do so, and I would expect to receive a letter from him some time next week. I believe it was promised to me before Christmas.

An hon. Member: Don't count on the Christmas mail.

Mr. Marshall: I realize the amount of money allocated in the FLIP program would not go very far towards full development. I wonder if the minister has any allocation of that funding? And is there funding going to such a project for the preparatory work which might help out in the future?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, should such funds be made available, I am sure that the Minister of Employment would want to make that announcement, and I will leave that to him.