

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

[Translation]

**INDIAN AFFAIRS****JAMES BAY HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT—ASSISTANCE BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT—DISCUSSIONS WITH QUEBEC**

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Yesterday, Max Gros-Louis stated that he had asked the federal government to intervene in connection with the James Bay development project. Can the minister tell us whether he has received such a request and, if so, what does his department intend to do about it?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, we have effectively received such a request from the Quebec Indian Association and we are now considering the situation. I will soon get in touch with the Quebec Indian Association in that connection.

**Mr. La Salle:** I would like to direct a supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Can he tell us if he is now engaged in consultations with the Quebec government and if the latter has also requested the federal government's co-operation?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I have discussed this matter several times either with the premier or with other Quebec ministers and, of course, we are ready to co-operate in order to find a solution agreeable to all.

[English]

**ASSISTANCE TO JAMES BAY AREA INDIANS IN OPPOSING HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT**

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I again ask the Minister for Indian Affairs whether, in light of the requests for assistance from the Indian Association of Quebec, he can assure that group that the Indians in the James Bay area will be helped by his department if they request legal assistance in their dispute with the government of Quebec?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** I have already said, Mr. Speaker, that we would be ready to help Indians in seeking a solution to the problem they are facing in the James Bay area. If the whole thing boils down to some kind of legal assistance, we shall be glad to consider this request in due course.

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[English]

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE****PROCEDURE IN RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENTS OF BENEFITS**

**Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration who was in his seat just a minute ago, but I shall address it to

[Mr. Speaker.]

his parliamentary secretary. It deals with a number of complaints I have received, and I am sure other hon. members have received similar complaints, regarding unemployed people who have received overpayments. In most cases these overpayments were caused by errors made by the staff of the unemployment insurance offices during that state of confusion they went through. Now these claimants are being asked to repay this money. What steps will be taken in this regard?

**Hon. Martin P. O'Connell (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

**Mr. Hales:** Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has returned to the chamber I will put my question again. It deals with the large number of claimants who have been assessed for overpayments. In most cases these overpayments were due to errors made by the staff in the unemployment insurance offices during the recent state of confusion they went through. Will these claimants be expected to repay these overpayments, or will each case have an individual assessment?

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the custom has always been in these types of cases, to discuss the individual problem rather than give a blanket ruling. If there have been any errors because of the administration during what the hon. member quite properly describes as a period of confusion, every effort will be made with the individual to make the repayments as easy as possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I note that there are a number of supplementaries sought, but hon. members should realize that we are running short of time and perhaps we should try to limit supplementaries. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** I believe the hon. member for Athabasca has been trying to ask a question supplementary to the previous one, and he might be recognized for that purpose.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I had to rise on a point of order in order to get your attention.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. If the hon. member rises on a point of order that is a different matter. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask a supplementary question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair has already recognized the hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador, and immediately thereafter I will recognize the hon. member for his supplementary. I think that would be more orderly.