

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Orlikow:** A further supplementary question. Is the President of the Treasury Board in fact considering entering the negotiations so that when the postal employees and their officials are dealing with the government they will be dealing with the minister rather than with an official who must come to the minister for approval before making any offers?

**Mr. Drury:** I thank the hon. member for this advice as to how the negotiations might be conducted. I can only reply that should my participation appear to serve a useful purpose I will be only too willing to do so.

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE****QUEBEC—MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE FEED GRAIN SHORTAGE**

**Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture a question.

Quebec mills are having trouble getting feed grain because the shipping season has begun for export purposes. Is the minister aware of the situation and, if so, what does he intend to do about it?

[English]

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I am aware that several feed mills in eastern Canada, not only in Quebec but in the Maritimes as well, have been finding it difficult in the last few days to obtain sufficient quantities of feed grain. I have asked the Livestock Feed Board to investigate this and to give me a report as quickly as possible along with suggestions as to what remedy might be put into play at once. A preliminary survey of the situation appears to indicate that there were insufficient forward orders placed for feed grain, perhaps in view of an unanticipated increase in demand, compared to the same period last year.

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT NIXON RESPECTING UNDERSEA NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Has-tings):** I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister.

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

**Mr. Hees:** I will wait for silence, Mr. Speaker. Has the Canadian government discussed with the government of the United

States President Nixon's proposal that all countries should renounce their claims to undersea natural resources beyond a point where the water reaches a depth of 200 metres? If so, what reaction did the Canadian government express to their counterparts in the United States?

**Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the government is studying President Nixon's proposals to ascertain the precise extent to which they indicate a change from the previous position. Until there is a decision on that, I have nothing further to add.

**Mr. Hees:** A supplementary question. When does the government intend to discuss these proposals with the United States government and to advise the Canadian people of the stand of the government on this important matter?

**Mr. McIlraith:** When they have completed the study, which will be very soon.

**Mr. Hees:** Must we really wait that long, Mr. Speaker?

**POLICY ON MUTUAL TROOP REDUCTIONS BY NATO AND WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES**

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque):** I wish to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister or the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the meeting of NATO foreign and defence ministers which will begin in Rome tomorrow, I believe, is the minister prepared to make a statement to the House on government policy with regard to appropriate steps which might be taken toward the objective of mutual troop reductions on the part of NATO on the one hand and the Warsaw Pact on the other?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I am sure the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be discussing this particular question when he attends the meeting in Rome. Perhaps he will be in a position to make a report on his return.

**Mr. MacLean:** Is the government prepared to support the suggestion of the British Foreign Secretary that the NATO powers should propose the setting up of a standing commission which would act as a channel of communication for the consideration of east-west relations in this important matter of troop reductions?