

Has the federal government been invited by the government of Quebec to participate in an assistance program for farmers of several counties of this province, where crops have been reduced by 50 per cent following bad weather blamed on rain making operations?

[English]

Mr. Bruce S. Beer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of this having been brought to the attention of the minister. I will discuss it and try to get an answer for the hon. member.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INQUIRY AS TO FURTHER CONFERENCE ON LAW OF THE SEA

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Queens): I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if the government is now taking action to initiate the calling of a further international conference on the law of the sea under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to resolve many outstanding differences in this field of international law.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it would not be accurate to say that we were having consultations about calling a conference on the law of the sea under the auspices of the United Nations, but the government is considering along with certain other countries the possibility of a conference that would cover such matters as conservation.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question related to the previous question I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Is it the intention of the government to ask parliament during this session to ratify the four conventions on the law of the sea, to which Canada subscribed and which I believe are now in force?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, it is not the intention of the government now to ask for ratification. My hon. friend is, of course, referring to the continental shelf convention?

Mr. MacLean (Queens): Yes, Mr. Speaker, and to the living resources of the sea.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): As my hon. friend knows, Mr. Speaker, the continental shelf

Inquiries of the Ministry

convention is one of four conventions signed by Canada at the conclusion of the law of the sea conference in 1958. It has not yet been ratified by Canada. It was felt best to ratify the four conventions together. However, I can point out to my hon. friend that it is not necessary to ratify the continental shelf convention in order to exercise the rights which are recognized in the convention. These rights are, in general, part of international law and Canada has continuously exercised them.

As far as ratification of the four conventions is concerned, there are technical aspects which have been under examination and we hope to have a clarification of these very soon.

[Translation]

INQUIRY AS TO CONTROL OF ARMS EXPORTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs concerning the forthcoming negotiations concerning NORAD?

Has the government decided to control or restrict shipments to foreign countries by the United States of arms made in Canada?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the NORAD defence organization is not—

[English]

Mr. Crouse: Speak into the microphone.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I think that is a very good suggestion. All observations made by ministers and members on this side of the house should be clearly understood by hon. gentlemen opposite.

An hon. Member: Impossible.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): NORAD, which is a defence organization, has nothing to do with the sale and export of armaments.

[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH UNION OFFICIALS RESPECTING LAY-OFFS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question