

## Oral Questions

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED FLOODING OF SKAGIT RIVER VALLEY—  
FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIONS TO UNITED  
STATES AUTHORITIES—JOINT POLICY

**Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister. It involves the Skagit River problem in British Columbia. I have given notice to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister tell the House what federal-provincial negotiations relating to terms of settlement of the Skagit River issue with Seattle have taken place since June, 1973?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, a great deal of negotiations has taken place. I cannot say that negotiations have been completely concluded, but I can say, to reassure those who are concerned about the flooding of the Skagit, that the federal government is presenting before the Federal Power Commission of the United States, before the deadline of March 15, a very substantial brief against the flooding. As of this day I cannot indicate whether or not that will be a brief presented with the support of the government of British Columbia, but the federal government is presenting that brief, regardless. If the hon. member wants to ask a question closer to the deadline, perhaps I may have further news for him regarding the nature of the presentation.

**Mr. Fraser:** I thank the Prime Minister for his answer. I wonder if he could be a little more definitive in telling us whether, at the present time, any joint federal-provincial policy on a basis of settlement has been achieved?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose it would be fair to say that there is, presumably, agreement on the part of both that the Skagit should not be flooded, but the way in which the representations should be made to the Federal Power Commission has not been agreed on by the government of British Columbia. The position of the federal government is that the two principals in this question are the government of British Columbia, which has received over a period of many years compensation from the city of Seattle in lieu of the flooding in order to pay in advance for the flooding, and the city of Seattle. The federal government is acting particularly as an authority in international dealings. We are attempting to put the case for British Columbia as strongly as we can because we are irrevocably opposed to the flooding. Whether British Columbia wishes to support us in this presentation has not yet been determined.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings has a supplementary to a previous question. He will be recognized for that purpose and the Chair will then see the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

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## AGRICULTURE

POSSIBILITY OF FORGIVABLE LOANS AT LOW INTEREST  
RATES TO ASSIST FARMERS

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister

[Mr. Lalonde.]

of Agriculture following the question put to him by the hon. member for Hastings. Keeping in mind the statement in the Speech from the Throne with regard to assisting farmers, does the minister anticipate that forgivable loans at low interest rates will be part of the legislative package he will be presenting to Parliament in the near future?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I would be wrong if I said it has not been considered, but it has not been finalized, either.

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## VETERANS AFFAIRS

RECIPIENTS OF WAR VETERANS ALLOWANCES, OLD AGE  
SECURITY AND GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT—  
PROVISION OF COST OF LIVING INCREASES

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the fact that on both December 10 and January 3 the minister said that the necessary steps would be taken so that veterans in receipt of old age security and the guaranteed income supplement on the one hand and the war veterans allowance on the other would get the cost of living increases in both those benefits which were due in January, whereas the order in council permitted them to get the OAS and GIS increase but not the WVA increase, will the minister say whether this question is being reviewed?

**Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, this matter is being reviewed.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

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## HEALTH

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL—REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN  
BUDGET EQUIVALENT TO RISE IN COST OF LIVING

**Mr. J. R. Holmes (Lambton-Kent):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare and is related to the Medical Research Council. In view of the serious cutbacks in medical research in Canada and in view of the possible brain drain resulting from the lack of funds, will the minister give his assurance that the moneys allocated to the 1974-75 budget of the Medical Research Council will be increased by an amount at least equivalent to the rise in the cost of living, calculated on the total expenditures in 1973-74 including the belated \$1 million grant which of course was far too little and too late?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is entitled to his opinion on this matter.