

Oral Questions

hope no announcement has to be made of any kind. As we said earlier, we are monitoring the situation very closely and we will be meeting with provincial ministers in early July for further discussions.

Our reports show that there are probably at the present time much better moisture conditions than last year in most areas of western Canada. We know there is one area in particular in Saskatchewan in need of moisture, but the crops planted have in most areas germinated quite well, and if they do get moisture within the next week or ten days we could still have a very good crop in those areas.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK—CUSTOMS SERVICE

Mr. Mike Landers (Saint John): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. Is the minister in a position to put to rest rumours of customs personnel reductions at the Saint John, New Brunswick, airport?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I can assure him there will be no reduction of services in the city of Saint John. There has been a review, with regard to the most efficient and effective use of manpower, but I can assure him there will be no reduction of the services of my department in that city.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

FISHING DISPUTE AT RESTIGOUCHE RESERVE, QUE.

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I have been in touch with the chief of the Indian band at Restigouche and he tells me that about 200 QPP officers have surrounded the reserve. The dispute is over fishing. The children are blocked from school and his band office is surrounded.

I am wondering if the minister could state whether he has some officials there attempting to solve this situation, and if he could bring us up to date as to what has happened in order to alleviate this situation.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I would tell the hon. member that I have just been advised the police have left the Restigouche reserve and the band chief has been in touch with the appropriate officials from Quebec and the deputy minister there, Mr. Gourdeau, and the band is resuming negotiations. The dispute is over the number of fishing days. The Indians wish to fish six days, the Quebec government which administers the Fisheries Act there wants three days,

and the dispute is over the remaining three days. They have agreed to resume negotiations.

FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, as a short supplementary, does the minister have any officials on hand in order to keep the situation under control, and have there been any other federal officials involved such as members of the RCMP or federal fisheries people, in order that the band chief can have some indication of what has happened?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I do not believe the RCMP have been involved at all. It is the Quebec Provincial Police. I think the matter just broke out this morning. My director general in the Quebec region has been in touch and is keeping a very close watch and is ready to assist in the negotiations.

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EMERGENCY MEASURES

TAX ON MATERIALS USED TO REPAIR DAMAGE CAUSED BY
NATURAL DISASTERS

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Privy Council in his capacity as the minister responsible for Emergency Planning Canada. At the June 5 conference of federal and provincial ministers and officials responsible for emergency planning, we are told that the participants addressed, among other topics, "more equitable arrangements for sharing the financial costs of large-scale natural disasters."

Since one of the government's stated aims in this area is the "mitigation of human suffering", and since the government has undertaken to consult with the provinces on arrangements for measures to alleviate hardship to individuals arising from disasters, I ask the minister if he raised with his provincial colleagues the possibility of remitting excise taxes levied on materials used in the course of repairing and/or replacing buildings and other losses as a result of major disasters? And if not, could he explain why?

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, indeed, on Friday last I had the honour of chairing a federal-provincial conference on Emergency Planning Canada which was attended by my provincial counterparts. The spirit that prevailed was most encouraging. Indeed there was an obvious willingness to co-operate even further to ensure that every region in Canada is able to cope more efficiently, more significantly and more constructively in the various emergency situations that may occur. With regard to the specific and quite restrictive suggestion made by the hon. member, no provincial minister brought it up at the conference, at least not to my knowledge and I was at the meeting all