

the Prime Minister agree to take extraordinary measures to alleviate the severe hardship caused by this unusual phenomenon?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for having notified my office of his question. The steps he suggests are already under way. I received a telephone call from the Premier of New Brunswick at my office some time yesterday, but of course, before that, I had been informed by the province of the storm and its effects. We are assisting the New Brunswick government in every way possible.

The RCMP and the Canadian Armed Forces are engaged in assisting in the evacuation of persons from flooded areas. The forces yesterday commenced construction of a temporary 150-foot bridge to replace a highway traffic bridge that has been washed away, and the Emergency Measures Organization has offered its assistance to the New Brunswick Department of Municipal Affairs to form a joint team to assess the extent of damage and estimate the best method of repair as well as the cost. The federal Department of Public Works has instructed its local officers to assist in this respect. Finally, the financial assistance of the federal government is available to the province of New Brunswick under the formula employed in the past with all provinces once the damage estimates are complete and, of course, if the Premier of New Brunswick should request such federal assistance.

[Translation]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

ST. HYACINTHE—LAYING-OFF OF GOODYEAR EMPLOYEES

Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, I should like to ask a question to his parliamentary secretary.

Can he tell the House whether the minister has received a telegram from the Central Council of the town of St. Hyacinthe informing him that 40 employees of the Goodyear Company were being laid off?

Mr. Speaker: I do not believe that the hon. member can simply ask whether a telegram or a message has been received by the minister concerned. In such terms, the question is out of order.

Mr. Ricard: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Prime Minister.

Inquiries of the Ministry

As the economic situation deteriorates constantly in St. Hyacinthe, would the Prime Minister be prepared to give particular attention to the matter and to suggest to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion to make of the St. Hyacinthe region a designated area?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is making a suggestion to the government and he should assume that it will be considered.

[English]

FISHERIES

ACTION RESPECTING DEPLETION OF RESOURCES BY FOREIGN FISHERMEN

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): I have a question I should like to direct to the Minister of Fisheries. In his absence I would normally direct it to his Parliamentary Secretary, but since he is absent I can only direct it to the Acting Minister of Fisheries, whoever he may be. In view of the statement made by the Minister of Fisheries in Montreal that the U.S.S.R. and Poland are depleting Canada's fisheries resources, what steps has the government taken to bring this matter before the international panel of experts at the United Nations, and what steps will be taken to call an immediate international conference on this matter which is of such vital concern to Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister of National Revenue): I will take this question as notice, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of supplementaries. This is an urgent matter, and I think there is a question of privilege here. There is no Acting Minister of Fisheries here today, although the friend of the minister fielded the question and the Parliamentary Secretary is not here. This situation is continuing day after day even though the minister is designated to be present. Here is an urgent matter of international importance and we have no one to answer for the government. This is very critical.

GRAIN

FINAL PAYMENTS ON DURUM WHEAT

Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Pending government action in reply to questions asked earlier this week on this subject, will the Prime Minister have an Order in Council