

he either accepts it or rejects it, depending on whether he thinks it is complete or incomplete.

FLOODS

ASSISTANCE FOR AREAS IN WESTERN PROVINCES—USE OF ARMED FORCES

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Is the Prime Minister in a position to say whether or not the premier of Saskatchewan has placed before the Government of Canada any claim for assistance in connection with the recent flood damage in that province? Second, has any estimate been made by the Department of Agriculture, officials of P.F.R.A. or any other federal authority as to the extent of the damage?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Without getting into details I can say that the premiers of several western provinces have applied for federal assistance. We are waiting to learn the extent of the damage and to receive more concrete figures before deciding in what way we can answer such requests.

Now that the danger of the floods has receded it might be worth while to point out that the federal government did play an outstanding part in providing needed assistance. Hundreds of members of the Canadian Armed Forces were at some time or other manning the dykes, and other departments, such as the Department of National Health and Welfare, and P.F.R.A. officials were involved in the operation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I agree entirely with what the Prime Minister had to say in the latter part of his statement. We are all very grateful for what was done. I would ask him now to answer the second question: Has there been any estimate made of the damage in the province of Saskatchewan? When he mentions other provinces he must be referring to the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Trudeau: And British Columbia.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, and British Columbia. Has there been any estimate as yet on the part of the federal government as to the extent of the damage?

Mr. Trudeau: To my knowledge the costs involved have not yet been fully appraised but I shall check to find out whether there has been some later development.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): While the federal government is considering

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making contributions in respect of flood damage, will it not also consider contributing toward the cost of flood prevention? I am thinking specifically, now, of the town of Lumsden in the Qu'Appelle Valley, and of similar areas.

Mr. Trudeau: At various times the federal government has taken action to help prevent floods. I believe the Canada Water Act will have something to say about that; it is due for introduction before the end of the session.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): In connection with the use of the armed forces to restrict the danger of flooding in the provinces, would the government consider refraining from making the usual charge to the provinces for such services?

Mr. Trudeau: In view of the fact that the charges are seldom paid anyhow, Mr. Speaker, it might be worthwhile looking into that suggestion.

AIR CANADA

STRIKE OF MECHANICS—ATTENDANCE OF MEDIATOR

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour arising out of the welcome news—I hope it remains true—that Air Canada and the International Association of Machinists are again in negotiation. Is the minister considering steps to have a mediator present in order that the second round of negotiations during the strike might be more productive than the first round?

Hon. Bryce S. Mackasey (Minister of Labour): I am happy to say that the machinists and Air Canada have been meeting since two o'clock this afternoon. I am particularly encouraged by the fact that the meeting was arranged on their own initiative. I hope these talks are productive and that they will bring an end to this strike, because I can assure both Air Canada and the union concerned that if they do not settle it of their own volition at this particular round of talks they can be prepared for a long strike, if they expect the government to step in and put an end to it through legislation.

Mr. Lewis: I agree with the minister's last remark—that the government will not attempt to interfere in that way. However when a striking union and the employer get together for a second time during a strike, the result must be satisfactory or there will be difficulty for a long time, and in these