

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

calls meaningful consultation. The purpose of the federal-provincial conference is to have meaningful consultation.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** A further supplementary question. Could it be that the Minister of Finance was misdirecting himself when he indicated during his remarks that the Prime Minister would be disclosing the proposals dealing with anti-inflationary measures to the provincial premiers prior to the conference?

**Mr. Trudeau:** I would have to refer to the statement of the minister on that point. I am not aware of this particular statement, Mr. Speaker.

## AGRICULTURE

## ACTION TO LOWER TRACTOR AND COMBINE PRICES

**Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the recently tabled report of the Barber Commission, which states that Canadian farmers are being charged excessive prices for farm machinery by multinational firms, can the minister indicate to the House what immediate action is being taken to make farm machinery available at lower cost to Canadian farmers?

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, up until the present, action has not been directed along that line. What I said on Friday was that an interdepartmental committee had already been established because there are some implications contained in Dr. Barber's findings and recommendations that deal with such things as anti-combines law, anti-trust law, and so on. He also recommends that discussion be held with counterpart officials in the United States and in the United Kingdom. This has already been initiated. I think it would be wise, and indeed fair, for the people who are affected by the findings and recommendations of the royal commission to have at least a day or two to look at the report, which has been in the public domain only since eleven o'clock or 11.30 last Friday morning.

**Mr. Gleave:** I appreciate the minister's statement that the report has been in the hands of the government for only a short while. However, in light of the fact that for some time it has been public knowledge that tractors were being sold more cheaply to people overseas than to Canadian farmers,

[Mr. Trudeau.]

would the minister act with all expedition to see that this situation is corrected as rapidly as possible?

**Mr. Olson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. As has already been pointed out, a number of actions have already been taken because as you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. member will recall, there was a preliminary report or position paper written by Dr. Barber for the agricultural congress held last March. This indicated in a preliminary way what he has now substantiated by evidence. During the intervening period a number of actions have been taken and, indeed, last September I visited the tractor factory in Czechoslovakia that he referred to to ascertain whether or not they would be interested in expanding in a substantial way exports of this type of equipment to North America, particularly Canada.

**Mr. W. M. Howe (Wellington-Grey):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture and I hope he will bring it to the attention of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact that the report describes tractor prices in Canada as being maintained at discriminatory, artificial levels, now maintained arbitrarily by a few large multinational corporations dominating the Canadian market, will the government use the same procedure as it has with the drug manufacturers and suggest that if prices are not reduced the government will seriously consider a definite program of its own?

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, this is part of the recommendations in the report. I think we should have a discussion with several ministers, such as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who is responsible for anti-combines legislation, and then have a discussion with the farm machinery and equipment companies named in the report.

**Mr. Howe:** A further supplementary for the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Would he consider referring to the Minister of Finance the possibility of a reverse dumping factor in order that there might be equalization of prices, as between the farmers of Canada and the farmers of England?

**Mr. Olson:** The Minister of Finance is already aware of that recommendation in the report.

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** A supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. In view of this evi-