

the provinces when they raise the subject, that this matter does not come under the jurisdiction of the provincial ministers of communications but is under the jurisdiction of a constitutional conference or the courts.

The hon. member is right when he says that the number of court proceedings is increasing. At the first federal provincial conference, we informed all the provincial ministers that even if there were negotiations between the federal government and the provincial ministers of communications, it was understood that the federal government would prosecute every time existing laws would be broken either by individuals or by provincial governments or agencies.

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### INDUSTRY

#### TEXTILES—SUGGESTED EMBARGO ON ASIAN PRODUCTS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, I want to put a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

In view of the hundreds of layoffs in the textile industry and since the decision of the department has still not been taken on this matter, could the minister tell the House if he intends to lay an embargo on textile products imported from certain Asiatic countries which compete with our Canadian industry and bring about massive layoffs?

[English]

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, on an earlier occasion I told the House that I had asked the Textile and Clothing Board to re-examine on an urgent basis the case for man-made woven fabrics. I would expect to receive that report today or tomorrow and to be able to make a fuller statement to the House later this week.

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### AGRICULTURE

#### SUBSIDY TO BEEF PRODUCERS—ALLEGED NEED FOR INCREASE

**Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and arises out of his statement of December 13 pertaining to assistance to beef producers. I have read his statement with interest and with continued hope that it will be of benefit, but the inflated price of cattle feed still confronts the beef producer. Arising from complaints by stock feeders in my area protesting the inflated price of hay and fodder, which has now reached \$50 to \$60 per ton, in many cases for last year's hay, how can the beef producers pay such prices for feed and remain in business?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the hon. gentleman is that in Ontario and eastern Canada at the present time farmers can raise steers on a feed contract for 40 cents a pound. Our support price is 45 cents, and over 45 cents a pound for

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top quality animals. Top quality animals are selling for 14 to 17 cents a pound higher than in the United States. So our beef producers may not be receiving as much as they might for every grade of animal, but they are receiving more than is the case to the south.

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### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

#### GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER OF POLICE OFFICERS—SUGGESTION THERE SHOULD BE NO PAROLE FOR THOSE SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Solicitor General a question in light of the answer given by the Minister of Justice that we have a law that calls for a certain degree of capital punishment. Last week I put on the order paper a question in which I asked the number of police officers who had been murdered and also the number of people who had been convicted for those murders, which amounted to nine since 1968. In light of the fact that two people have now been found guilty of killing a member of the RCMP in British Columbia, and in view of other violence concerning police officers, a matter now before the media—because charges are pending I do not want to raise the matter—is it the policy of his department—I am not saying it is the policy of the government—that as far as capital punishment is concerned it has been abolished de facto, if not de jure?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General):** No, Mr. Speaker, it is not. The Minister of Justice said that the law provides for capital punishment in certain cases. I must say I agree with the hon. member that it was indeed a very horrible crime which took place in New Brunswick, and the compassion of the federal government goes out to the families and friends of the victims. But my department has no jurisdiction in these cases until all trials and appeals have been dealt with.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the law in that regard. Since the government has shown that it has refused to implement the law on capital punishment since 1968 to any degree, will the Solicitor General make certain that any person convicted of the murder of police officers, a crime calling for capital punishment, who are imprisoned for life by commutation will not be paroled until there is an executive decision, so that the government takes the responsibility of protecting society?

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Speaker, the law now provides that no person who commits either capital or non-capital murder can be paroled without cabinet authority.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Fundy-Royal.

**Mr. Fortin:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Lotbinière is rising on a point of order.