

Inquiries of the Ministry

have to recess for the summer months, could the minister inform the house if there are any new developments regarding the publication of his White Paper dealing with the Woods committee report on pension administration?

Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I still hope to table this White Paper as soon as possible.

Mr. Laniel: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question.

Could the minister tell us whether "as soon as possible" means before the summer recess?

Mr. Speaker: the hon. member is repeating the question he just asked.

[*English*]

GRAIN**WHEAT—ACTION TO ASSIST FARMERS IN WESTERN AND EASTERN CANADA**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether he is now in a position to inform the house, following his consultations, if the government proposes to take any specific action to be of assistance to the wheat farmers of western Canada, and if the government will be taking this action before the house adjourns.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind the Leader of the Opposition that the government has taken a number of steps to help in this situation. I am not in a position to announce today any additional steps in this regard.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question. Is the minister expecting to be in a position shortly to announce any additional steps to be taken?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, we always hope that we will be able to do these things as quickly as possible.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise me, following the representations I made in the form of a question last week, whether he will now look very seriously at the situation in northern Alberta and parts of northern Saskatchewan, where the debt position of farmers is having alarming consequences and is resulting in a number of foreclosures and the repossession of machinery. Would the minister consider having his officials look into the situation

to see what the federal government is able to do?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I advised the hon. member for Peace River when he asked his question that within the limits of the jurisdiction of the department of Agriculture we have taken those steps. We have taken measures, not in the last few days but a long while ago, in fact months ago, to assist any person who had a loan from the Farm Credit Corporation, taking into account the circumstances surrounding his income position. I think that this is about the limit as far as the Department of Agriculture is concerned.

What is more, I think the hon. member knows that the matters raised in the other parts of his question perhaps lie within provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Baldwin: A further supplementary. Is the minister not aware of the fact that some years ago a previous Conservative government was able to find means of jurisdiction—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Baldwin: —to repair the mess created by a previous Liberal government?

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether the government is giving consideration to taking emergency steps to relieve the cash position of farmers, such as through the form of acreage payments or the making of a special payment on wheat deliveries?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, this question has been asked at least a dozen times in the house and I have nothing to add to the replies I have given.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the minister is quite right when he says that the question has been asked dozens of times but has not been answered, I wonder whether he could tell the house this simple fact: Has the government decided to do nothing, or is it still going to do something, though it is not yet ready to tell the house what it is going to do?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member that the question as asked is argumentative.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Then may I rephrase my question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that for