

Inquiries of the Ministry

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

PRAIRIE PROVINCES—INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister whether, in view of certain representations made to him over the weekend, the government plans to order or conduct an inquiry into the economic difficulties in western Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, no representations were made to me over the weekend, as far as I am aware. Questions were asked along lines that were alluded to earlier by the right hon. member for Prince Albert, and I believe they were dealt with sufficiently at that time.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the government intend to announce any additional measures to meet the deepening economic difficulties, particularly in the prairies?

Mr. Trudeau: This question was asked at least four times in my memory in the past two weeks and was answered by me and by the minister responsible for the Wheat Board.

Mr. Stanfield: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the question would not have to be asked so often if the government would do something about the problem.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Is it a correct statement of government policy that the farmers in the west are not poor because they drive tractors and that therefore no additional measures by the government are appropriate?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether he intends to introduce legislation on the much talked about government program to buy up farms since many farmers are driving tractors worth less than \$2,000?

LEGISLATION TO IMPLEMENT REDUCED WHEAT ACREAGE—FINANCIAL INCENTIVE TO FARMERS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supple-

[Mr. Groos.]

mentary question of the Prime Minister. Is it the intention of the government to introduce legislation to reduce the amount of acreage which farmers on the prairies can sow to wheat in the coming year, and does the government intend to provide some financial incentive for this purpose?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the House seems to be very concerned with the legislation to come in due course; such will be announced in due course by the government. There is no attempt by the government to do everything today. We have spread our legislative program over the whole session and we expect co-operation from all parties in the execution of this program.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A further supplementary question. In view of the fact that the House is not to know until the legislation is introduced, has the Prime Minister conveyed this information to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board who has made statements to the effect that the government intends to curtail the amount of acreage which the farmers will sow to wheat?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is asking about communications between a minister and the Prime Minister. The question as asked is not in order.

[Translation]

Does the hon. member for Portneuf wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Yes, Mr. Speaker, and to the Prime Minister.

Last year he granted some credits to the opposition members so that they could become better informed and, consequently, ask more relevant questions. Last week, we were glad to learn that hon. members on the government side would enjoy the same benefit. Could the Prime Minister tell us what means he intends to take, personally, to improve his own replies?

[English]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. In view of the fact that in the Prime Minister's answer he dealt with the economic plight of western Canada has he anything to announce—and this affects the economics of western Canada—in reference to the strike that is tying up all the ships in Vancouver?