

Inquiries of the Ministry

intend to present the problem to the Supreme Court at the earliest possible date for a ruling?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the premise on which this question is based is false in that the provincial governments and the federal government have not expressed any doubts as to the efficacy of Bill C-197 in coming to grips with this problem.

Mr. Baldwin: Nonsense! How about British Columbia and Manitoba?

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. Has the government received representations from provincial authorities or any commodity groups to test the constitutionality of the Quebec court ruling affecting provincial trade? If so, what action is contemplated?

Mr. Olson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the possibility of taking that course of action was discussed at the federal-provincial conference held here in Ottawa in September. The considered judgment, or what I might call the unanimous decision of that conference as reported in the press, was that we should seek a solution to this problem by co-ordinating the efforts of provincial marketing boards through a vehicle such as Bill C-197.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, would the minister get a new law professor to instruct him on constitutional law?

Mr. Olson: The advice I have been getting is excellent.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that explanations given to this House and to the Standing Committee on Agriculture do not assure a solution of the problem of trade in agricultural products across Canada, will he undertake to make a statement on motions during this coming week setting out proposed action to deal with this problem?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I think I would have to consider very carefully the propriety of doing that because this House has referred the matter of marketing legislation to a committee which is now actively studying the proposal that is before it. It seems to me that

[Mr. Danforth.]

is where the debate ought to take place. We hope this study can be expedited as rapidly as possible so the provisions of that bill can be made operational for the benefit of farmers across the country.

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, is the minister informing this House that decisions on trade between the provinces are to be reached in standing committees rather than by the federal government of Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a question.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Is he aware that technically it is impossible, because of the rules of the House of Commons, to have Bill C-197 passed during this session? In light of that, is he now prepared to take this proposal to the Supreme Court to test its validity?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I am also aware that if there had been greater co-operation from the hon. member and his colleagues this bill would have been back in this House long ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I understand the hon. member for Crowfoot is rising on a point of order and I will recognize him in a moment. I think I should bring to the attention of hon. members that we really should not have a debate during the question period on a bill which is before a committee of the House at the present time. The hon. member for Crowfoot has risen on a point of order and I will recognize him now.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege. The Minister of Agriculture has imputed motives to my actions.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: Let me make this point abundantly clear. I did everything within my power to co-operate and to solicit information as to the exact way this bill would operate. When the bill came up for second reading and was debated in the House of Commons I made one speech, and one speech only. I was accused then of holding it up. It then went to