

Reports Referred to Agriculture Committee

July 31, 1962; and 5, the supplementary report of the Canadian wheat board for 1961-62 pool accounts for wheat, be referred to the standing committee on agriculture and colonization.

I might say if this is done it seems to me it would enable the committee to discuss all the matters that have been raised by hon. gentlemen opposite, and I am informed that it is not necessary, because the committee has already been given power to report to the house, to do more than make the reference.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Gregoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, could the Secretary of State be asked to include also the annual report we have just received from the Minister of Finance concerning the Farm Improvement Loans Act?

[*Text*]

Mr. Pickersgill: I will be glad to take that under consideration, and it could be referred in another motion later.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Secretary of State that these reports should certainly be sent to the committee on agriculture and colonization, but I doubt very much whether his other statement, that this will cover the items we had in mind, is quite valid. However, I think we should start with an investigation and examination of these reports, and then I hope the government will give serious consideration to the other matters, one of which is to look into bread and milling prices, which is a very important question at this time and which will not come under these reports.

Second, there is the matter which the Minister of Agriculture himself has raised from time to time, namely the cost of farm machinery, a study which the committee on agriculture and colonization began in 1961 and I do not think was ever completed. This would be an excellent study for the committee to carry on at a later date, but the reports which the minister has now proposed referring to the committee are a good beginning. As I have said, I hope the government will consider referring the other two matters to the committee at a later date.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I want to say I accept the statement of the Secretary of State that within the ambit of all the things referred to the committee it is possible to study the specific subject matter I brought up and asked for unanimous consent the other day. But in accepting this I suggest to Your Honour and to the Secretary of State that

[*Mr. Pickersgill.*]

the matter of feed grain prices should be given some precedence because of the urgency of the need to look into it. Perhaps the house may take some decision to do something about this wide discrepancy in price, but with that reservation I am suggesting that this can be investigated within the terms of the motion made.

Motion agreed to.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CUBA—REPORTED ARREST OF CANADIAN CITIZENS

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, regarding the two Canadians in custody in Cuba, would the Secretary of State for External Affairs inform the house whether the Canadian embassy has been able to communicate with them, and what efforts have been made so far by the government of Canada to assure that these men will receive a fair trial and not a mockery of a trial?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian embassy in Havana is in close communication with the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa concerning the recent arrest in Cuba of two Canadian citizens whose names have been given in public and which I need not repeat. The circumstances and background concerning the arrest of these persons are not fully known but are being looked into carefully. The Canadian embassy in Havana is taking all steps appropriate under international practice to ensure that the interests of the two Canadian citizens are adequately safeguarded.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Can the minister state whether the government in Cuba has permitted representatives of the embassy to see these men personally?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I wonder if the right hon. gentleman would allow me to qualify the answer I just gave. I believe that is the situation, but a message has just come in saying permission has been asked by the consul for an immediate visit with the Canadian prisoners, and it is agreed by the Cuban government that arrangements should be made for this. We have further asked that we be kept fully informed of any judicial proceedings against the two parties.