

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Is the answer a simple "no", instead of a multitude of equivocation?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Greenwood.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE****LAY-OFFS OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES AT CHATHAM, N.B.,  
BASE—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROVIDE  
ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** My question is addressed to the Acting Minister of National Defence, but I am not quite sure who he is. Has the attention of the minister been called to the recent lay-off of 50 employees at the Canadian Forces Base, Chatham, New Brunswick, with a consequent loss of jobs, seniority, retirement plan and other benefits and the serious effect of this lay-off in the already depressed situation? What action is the government taking to provide alternative employment for those affected?

**Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, this matter has been brought to the attention of the Acting Minister of National Defence and all possible steps that can be taken at present are being taken.

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps someone over there could tell us where the Minister of National Defence is and whether he is alive and well.

**Mr. Fairweather:** He has gone on a trip with Henry Kissinger.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Would the acting minister accept some persuasion from this side of the House to have his colleagues reconsider this program of lay-offs at the end of March since it affects not only Chatham but all bases right across the country and in fact hundreds of men are being laid off at a time when unemployment continues at an unacceptably high level?

• (1210)

**Mr. Dubé:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is alive and well. At the present time he is visiting Canadian bases, as he should, and on his return he will be given notice of the question asked by the hon. member.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE****SETTLEMENT OF CONTRACTS ON REGIONAL BASIS**

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. Is it the policy of the Treasury Board, in negotiating contracts with public servants working in different parts of Canada, to try to settle wage rates on a regional basis?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** In principle, yes, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Olson.]

**Mr. Fairweather:** Why does the government attempt to institutionalize the dilemma that faces this country, the dilemma of regional disadvantages and disparities?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I would think that the way the supplementary question is asked it is inviting debate, but if the minister wishes to reply perhaps he will be allowed to do so briefly.

**Mr. Drury:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a question but an argument that is being presented. I would reply by saying it is not true that an attempt is being made to institutionalize our problems. This is an attempt to bring about, in an orderly way, a greater measure of unity.

**Mr. Fairweather:** Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

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[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE****HOGS—COMPENSATION TO PRODUCERS OF WEANLINGS**

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

In view of continuous submission of petitions from weanling producers calling for financial assistance as compensation for losses incurred during 1971, may I ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture whether he would be prepared to have this special problem considered in order to give, if warranted, a favourable reply to this class of producers who, according to the petition I received this morning, are calling for payment of a certain amount per brood sow?

[English]

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I have answered that we intend to pay this deficiency payment to those who market finished hogs. It seems to me that the hon. member has raised this question before, and he has agreed with me that the possibility of paying on the same hog more than once, if one were to make the payment at any other point in the marketing system, would be very high, and therefore it is not desirable.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse):** I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask the hon. minister—although I have already put this question I believe we did not quite understand each other—whether he would be prepared to recognize that those raising hogs for marketing at 200 lbs., for instance, are in a different class from those raising piglets. Losses incurred by producers of piglets are not compensated under government policy, whereby there is payment of \$5 for a "finished hog". Therefore—

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Perhaps the minister might reply to the rephrased question briefly, and then we will try to proceed to another subject.