

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Murphy (Westmorland): Then I would like to ask the Minister of Finance whether the Atlantic provinces shall continue to suffer under the castor oil policy enunciated by Premier Flemming?

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member will now agree that I was right in not permitting him to ask the question.

Hon. George C. Marler (St. Antoine-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance of the subject of tight money and the remarks of the Minister of Finance, would he not think it appropriate if he, on behalf of the government, were to tell us what measures his government has taken since taking office to reduce the tight money situation?

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Speaker I did that on a former occasion. Perhaps my hon. friend was not here to hear it, but he will find the reference to the subject in *Hansard*.

IRRIGATION**SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—INQUIRY AS TO CONSTRUCTION START**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. M. Johnson (Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the promises that the South Saskatchewan river dam would be commenced within six months of the election of a Conservative government, can the Prime Minister indicate what steps are being taken to ensure a construction start by December 10; and would the right hon. gentleman also indicate when this government plans to accept the invitation of the province of Saskatchewan to discuss the proposal?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are ready to discuss the proposal at any time. However, this does give me an opportunity to point out that the provincial treasurer of Saskatchewan recently made a statement to the effect that in the construction of the South Saskatchewan river dam and power project the federal government was now expected to pay everything. That does not represent anything like the basis upon which consideration is to be given to that project.

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Melville): Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that I am now very pleased to have the statement that I have been making ever since 1947 corroborated by the leader of the government, that the provincial treasurer in Saskatchewan was

not prepared to accept any condition other than that the federal government pay the whole cost.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): May I ask the Prime Minister this supplementary question. Is it not a fact that the Saskatchewan government has been on record to the effect that it would bear the whole cost of the electrical installation and some other costs, but that since the government is to assist in the development of electricity in the maritimes Saskatchewan does not expect to be discriminated against by the government of Canada?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I can see that there is still quite a bit of controversy between the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar and the hon. member for Melville. As far as the provincial government of Saskatchewan is concerned, we are willing to meet with that government at any time. I understood that a basis of agreement was determined two years ago. However, within the last few weeks the provincial treasurer of Saskatchewan came out with a proposition apparently indicating a change of point of view, that the former agreed division was not acceptable and that the federal government was to assume all the costs.

We are ready to meet with the government of Saskatchewan and its representatives at any time. Our point of view regarding the South Saskatchewan river dam and irrigation project is unchanged. We will go ahead, but we do not want the provincial government of Saskatchewan to alter the rules between innings.

Mr. Gardiner: Might I just repeat, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think hon. members will agree that this seems to be developing into a first-class debate on the South Saskatchewan dam, which to my mind is not appropriate at this time, and I would ask members to let it go at this for today.

Mr. Johnson (Kindersley): On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is a matter of debate; it is a matter of the Prime Minister equivocating in his answer. He never answered one of the questions at all.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I am not one who asks for withdrawals. There is no equivocation and I do not ask for a withdrawal; but I do not want equivocation on the part of anyone else to this agreement and that is the reason I made the remarks I did.

Mr. Pickersgill: Just another broken promise.