

the legal officers of the Department of Justice, why could he not do what many have suggested he should do?

Mr. Benson: I received the advice on Thursday morning last.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I should like to ask a supplementary question following that answer. When was the Department of Justice contacted to give their decision about this transaction?

Mr. Woolliams: Let us have the truth.

Mr. George Muir (Lisgar): A supplementary question. If the minister received the advice on Thursday morning, why did he not send out the civil service cheques on Thursday?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, the meeting of treasury board which was necessary to authorize these transfers took place on Thursday afternoon.

[Later:]

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that he knew on Wednesday money was available to pay the civil servants' mid-month salaries, why did he not give orders that these payments should be made on Thursday?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, that statement is entirely unfounded.

CO-OPERATIVES

LEGISLATIVE ACTION CONTEMPLATED

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he and the cabinet have received a brief from the Co-operative Union of Canada asking, among other things, for co-operative legislation, which I believe the government has had under study for some three years. What action does the government contemplate taking in light of these representations?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have received that brief. I had the pleasure with some of my colleagues of discussing it with representatives of the co-operative movement in Canada. A committee has been working for some time now on the question of federal legislation as requested by the brief, and it is expected that we will receive the report of that committee within the next day or two.

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Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question. May I ask the Prime Minister whether the committee is working on a draft of a bill to general study? If so, how soon can we expect be put before the house, or is this merely a a bill?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, it is far from a general study. The committee is discussing possible legislation. I hope to have the report with the detail I have indicated concerning legislation very shortly.

[Later:]

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister arising out of his reference to co-operative legislation. If that is the case, is it the government's intention to set up a federal department of co-operatives?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, that does not follow from anything I said in reply to an earlier question.

OLD AGE SECURITY

INQUIRY AS TO AMOUNT OF PENSION IN LEGISLATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister of health. As he is quoted in the *Globe and Mail* of this morning as stating that it is his intention to introduce legislation to provide a guaranteed annual income to all recipients of old age pensions of \$105 per month, could the minister inform the house whether this is the figure that will appear in the legislation?

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the figure that is proposed was announced to the house last July, I believe, and no change has been made.

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. We had the assurance of the Prime Minister Thursday evening that this legislation would be available this week. Would the minister say whether we will immediately proceed to debate this legislation?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I myself would prefer to get the medicare bill through before I tackle the pension bill.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.