

Inquiries of the Ministry

hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration but, in his absence, I shall put it to his parliamentary secretary.

What was the answer given by the minister to the letter sent to him by the mayor of Desbiens, on March 15, with regard to a winter work project estimated at \$40,000?

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to suggest to the hon. member to put his question on the order paper, since there is talk of adjournment. Under the circumstances his question could be considered in order.

[*English*]

GRAIN**WHEAT—INQUIRY AS TO FINAL PAYMENT FOR 1966-67 CROP**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, in view of the possibility that the house may soon adjourn, and in view of the fact that the wheat pool for the 1966-67 crop year has been closed since March 1, almost three weeks, can the Minister of Trade and Commerce advise the house when the final payment to the wheat producers will be made and how much it will be?

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I have been in continual touch with the Canadian Wheat Board to see whether the payment might be expedited. The work is progressing and I think the final payment will be announced a week from today. It will be around that date, but at this time I am unable to say what the total amount will be.

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Does the question asked by the hon. member for Medicine Hat represent the extent to which the abilities of that hon. member have been utilized by the government since he joined the Liberal party?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is out of order on many grounds. That type of question should not be asked.

FINANCE**INQUIRY AS TO AMENDMENT OF FARM IMPROVEMENT LOANS ACT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of

[Mr. Simard.]

Finance. In the absence of any legislation affecting farm improvement loans and in view of the fact that the banks have generally provided loans at a lower rate of interest, has the minister recently had any consultation with the banks in respect of their continuing to provide loans at lower rates until legislation is introduced?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have been in touch with the banks about this matter. I am hopeful, if the house will agree, that we can get an amendment to the Farm Improvement Loans Act through before we adjourn.

Mr. Korchinski: If there is no assurance that there will be such agreement, will the legislation be retroactive?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member's question is hypothetical.

Mr. Korchinski: Mr. Speaker, I have not completed my question. Will the legislation be retroactive or will the farmers have to continue paying higher rates purely because the minister is in a hurry to become prime minister?

Mr. Ed. Schreyer (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Is it the intention of the government to propose amendments to the Farm Improvement Loans Act to remove the statutory limit on the interest rate?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is the intention to remove the statutory limitation and give the governor in council the power to regulate.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, does the minister intend to bring down that legislation before the recess?

Mr. Sharp: If we could obtain agreement to pass it quickly I certainly would.

POWER**COLUMBIA RIVER—REPORTED INCREASE IN COSTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I apologize for not having given him notice but things have been in a turmoil today. In view of the fact that the government of British Columbia has now practically admitted that the Columbia River treaty projects will cost