

Inquiries of the Ministry

government to assist the farmers in achieving this objective so they will not be forced out of business?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang), as the Prime Minister has pointed out, said in respect of this matter in the House last week that if the government has an announcement to make in this regard it will be made in the normal manner.

[Later:]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the deepening financial crisis on the prairies, is the government now considering a deficiency payment to western farmers? I ask the question because the minister did not give us any indication in this regard.

Mr. Trudeau: This question was asked by the hon. member and answered by the minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, this is not the case. The minister did not make a statement regarding a deficiency payment.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

WHEAT—NEW QUOTA DELIVERY SYSTEM

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In light of the previous questions, is the government able to announce whether it intends to come out with a new quota system for the delivery of wheat by farmers in the near future?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I keep repeating the same answer. The minister is constantly confronted with such propositions. The government has its own policy and will announce any further steps in due course.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

AGENDA FOR NEXT CONFERENCE

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet I should like to answer a question asked yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the agenda for the forthcoming federal-provincial conference. There are three items on the agenda. The first is the economic situation. The second is pollution and the third is the report of the tax structure committee. Of

[Mr. Muir (Lisgar).]

course these items are fairly broad and no doubt the provinces will want to elaborate on each of them.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in view of the nature of the agenda and particularly in view of the importance of these topics, would the Prime Minister agree it would be desirable to have representatives of the opposition parties attend the conference as observers with a view to the opposition parties being fully informed concerning the nature of these discussions and the form of the conclusions?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, of course such a matter could not be decided unilaterally by the federal government. I must say there has been no inclination on the part of any of the governments at the time of an in-camera conference to invite opposition members as observers at such in-camera conferences. This I believe has never been the practice even at the time the hon. member was leader of a provincial government.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister not agree it has always been a matter for the leader of the federal government to decide who is to be included in the delegations and that if a provincial premier, for example, were to include the leader or a member of an opposition party no other delegation would have the slightest objection to this?

Mr. Trudeau: I believe that would be correct. If it so happened that a provincial government wanted to include in its delegation members of the opposition, certainly we would have no desire to exercise any veto over such a composition of the delegation, but this supposes that in some places they do find opposition members who are co-operative and constructive.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. In view of what the Prime Minister has just said, would he not agree that if the government of Canada included—surely there are some co-operative members in the opposition parties in the House—representatives of the opposition parties he has no reason to believe that any provincial delegation would object?

Mr. Trudeau: I am sure the provinces would not be in a position to object, but as a government we have reached the quite firm conclusion that in the matter, for instance, of the economic situation the opposition par-