

immediately. If they are not, I shall give consideration to tabling the letter in any event.

Mr. Lewis: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Prime Minister consider at the same time tabling the agenda for that conference?

Mr. Pearson: Speaking subject to correction, Mr. Speaker, I think the letter dealt with the question of the agenda. It asked for the views of the provincial governments.

FINANCE

LOANS BY BANKS UNDER FARM IMPROVEMENT ACT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Perth): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Does the minister know whether any chartered banks are refusing to grant loans under the Farm Improvement Loans Act because of the low interest rates which are permitted to be charged for such loans?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker, I have not had reports of that kind.

Mr. Monteith: Would the minister be good enough to look into this matter and report to the house?

SEARCH AND RESCUE

INQUIRY AS TO PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL COAST GUARD SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (Queens-Lunenburg): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the government's plan to scrap the construction of five coast guard cutters which would have been used for rescue service on the high seas, is the government giving thought to providing additional coast guard services through the use of existing ships that are now manned and operating in the Canadian navy and other marine agencies of government?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder if the question is of immediate urgency. The hon. member may have thought of putting it on the order paper.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, the fact that contracts worth \$30 million were to be let by the Department of Transport indicates the urgency of the matter. As rescue ships will still be required during emergencies on the high

Inquiries of the Ministry

seas, I think the minister should consult with his colleagues—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has indicated the importance of the matter but he may want to give notice of his intention to debate it on the adjournment proceedings.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

WINNIPEG—THEFT OF ARMS FROM MINTO ARMOURIES

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Has a court of inquiry been convened concerning the theft of arms at the Winnipeg armoury. If so, what conclusions have been reached?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): The investigation is still going on, Mr. Speaker.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

ALLEGED DISREGARD OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES BY AUTHORITIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): I wish to direct a question to the Postmaster General. Is the minister aware of the situation which has resulted in a work stoppage by postal employees at St. Catharines, Hamilton, and other Ontario towns as a result of the alleged disregard of grievance procedures by postal authorities which followed the suspension of two postal employees? If he is aware of this, what action does he consider taking?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Postmaster General): I am aware of this, Mr. Speaker. In six post offices in the Niagara peninsula, letter carriers refused to report this morning; they took part in a wildcat strike after an employee—not two employees—was suspended. As far as the grievance procedure is concerned, that still exists.

The suspended employee can appeal the decision by way of grievance procedure, and we offered to begin at the third level of that procedure instead of at the bottom. The employees' organization asked us to go to the fourth level, which we accepted. They also asked us not to institute disciplinary action against letter carriers who took part in the strike. This we cannot accept.