

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 18, 1970

● (2:10 p.m.)

The House met at 2 p.m.

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate do unite with the House of Commons in the appointment of a special joint committee to examine and report upon proposals, made public, on a number of subjects related to the constitution of Canada, and that certain honourable Senators have been appointed to act on the said committee.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

##### STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I should like, Mr. Speaker, to report on the federal-provincial conference which took place here in Ottawa on Monday and Tuesday of this week. If I may have the consent of the House I would propose to table a copy of the communiqué issued at the conclusion of that conference.

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** Has the Prime Minister the consent of the House to table the document he has just mentioned?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed.

[English]

**Mr. Trudeau:** While there have been a great many meetings at the ministerial and officials level in recent months, the conference provided the first opportunity for some time for the heads of the federal and provincial governments to discuss a number of matters of common concern not relating to the constitutional review. The first item, and the one to which most time was devoted, concerned the economic situation. Under this head we discussed in some detail the problem of inflation, to which I shall return in a moment, as well as a number of more specific problems.

Among these latter, particular attention was devoted to the serious difficulties facing the western grain farmers. Emphasizing the adverse effects of the current difficulties in exporting wheat, the prairie premiers put forward a number of suggestions to which the federal government will give careful consideration in the course of its continuing efforts to devise the most effective means for dealing with this problem. In recent months the government has introduced a number of measures designed to alleviate the difficulties facing the grain farmer, and we may have some further measures to propose in this area before long. However, no one at the conference was under any illusion that there is a simple or obvious solution. All agreed that the position in the west is extremely difficult and that the consequences affect every area of Canada. The decline in the export market for wheat, and the lack of alternatives of adequate economic return, constitute a most serious national problem.

As our second item we discussed the problem of pollution, which is rapidly becoming a threat to human welfare, not only in Canada but indeed throughout the world. While current pollution problems are most acute in highly populated and industrialized areas, the rapid growth in pollution-causing activities of every kind poses a major threat in all parts of the country. There was general agreement that the effective handling of this problem both to clean up the consequences of past neglect and to prevent a progressively more rapid degradation of the environment, will require a major effort and close co-operation on the part of all levels of government as well as the private sector. It was also recognized that important aspects of this problem lie outside national jurisdiction and call for effective action on an international scale. Against this general background there was special urgency attached to problems of water pollution. Although some provinces indicated difficulties with particular aspects of the proposed Canada Water Act, there was general acceptance of the requirements underlying that bill for vigorous federal leadership in this area.