

● (1430)

MEETING WITH PREMIERS OF PROVINCES—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF RESULTS

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, we are now seeing the difficulty of having this discussion in the question period where we can obtain no answers or merely evasive answers. My question is directed to the ministry which means it does not have to be answered by the Prime Minister, but by someone who was there. We have a right to know what went on yesterday. Would somebody mind telling us.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear from the statements made by the other prime ministers who were present, the prime ministers of the provinces, that this was one of the most successful conferences ever convened.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO ASSIST BEEF PRODUCERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the tragic slaughtering of cattle which has taken place, and which is continuing to take place in the province of Quebec, and considering that the minister said in the House last week that he would be announcing this week some program for the assistance of cow-calf operators, I wonder whether the minister has finally made up his mind about this important question and is in a position to inform the House what the government intends to do.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to interfere with the rights of hon. members to present questions during the question period but it seems to me the hon. member is trying to have it both ways. He succeeded in having this very important subject matter set down for debate beginning at eight o'clock this evening. Under the circumstances, I can scarcely consider the questions involved in that same subject urgent enough to be considered during the question period.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

MEETING WITH PREMIERS OF PROVINCES—PROPOSAL TO DEFER SPENDING ON SOME CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AND TRANSFER FUNDS TO HOUSING

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I shall defer to your judgment in respect of the fair-minded decision made earlier and shift my question to the Minister of Finance concerning the meeting which took place yesterday between the Prime Minister and the premiers. I should like to ask the minister whether the government is giving serious consideration to the proposal made by some of the premiers, which I understand gained

Oral Questions

wide acceptance, that the federal government defer spending on some of the construction projects which were planned, but which are not of immediate importance, such as office buildings, and that the federal government should transfer such funds to housing.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there was a general feeling on the part of the premiers that in some parts of the country where there was an overheating of the construction industry it would be in the interest of the government to postpone some of the non-residential construction in order to free up that industry for residential construction. There was a general feeling that that was the proper stance to take. What the stance of the federal government will be will depend upon the estimates and budgetary policy.

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FINANCE

POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING FUNDS AVAILABLE TO MUNICIPALITIES FOR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. May I ask the Minister of Finance whether the government intends to increase the amount of funds going out to the provinces to be channelled back to the municipalities for capital expenditures in respect of sewers and other similar publicly needed facilities, in the context of dealing with the looming unemployment in the winter and spring months.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, announcements to that effect would be made in certain aspects by my colleague the Minister of State for Urban Affairs and in others, if there were an appropriate response, on budget night.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

CONSEQUENCE OF EXPULSION OF HAITIANS—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

In view of the recent statements he made in this House to the effect that the government was eager to favour the coming to Canada of French-speaking immigrants and to deal in a humanitarian way with the victims of oppressions, does not the hon. Minister feel that both these aims will be thwarted by the deportation of several hundred Haitians from Canada, and more specifically from the Province of Quebec.

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in announcing that intention of the government to promote Francophone immigration, it was indicated that such immigration should be under Canadian law and according to Canadian rules and regula-