

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

parts of the country. Each has its advantages and each has its disadvantages. It is considered desirable to look at all these various alternatives in deciding whether a new system should be made applicable to ports such as the one under development at Roberts Bank in British Columbia, and perhaps other ports such as Montreal as well.

I expect this report will be ready for consideration by the end of November. I will take under advisement the possibility of having the report studied by the House of Commons committee on transport and letting them decide, on the basis of evidence that can be brought before them, what action should be taken in respect of it. Subsequent to that I would hope to undertake joint meetings with British Columbia to decide who should administer the various aspects of the port and its development, and perhaps not just that port but all the various ports of the lower mainland.

**Mr. Nowlan:** May I ask a supplementary question, though I hesitate to do so if it has to cover the whole answer given by the minister. Are we to understand from this answer the present situation is that there is no federal jurisdiction or control over the access that links the port development with the other federal railways, and that there is no undertaking between the provincial government and the federal government respecting that access? Do we have to wait a month or so until this report is received?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. In my view the supplementary question is argumentative.

**Mr. Nowlan:** May I put the question in another way. I was trying to simplify it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I will allow the hon. member to ask the supplementary question, but I remind him that we have only 30 minutes today and there are many other members who are seeking to ask questions.

**Mr. Nowlan:** I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, but this is of particular concern to the people on the west coast. I should like to ask the minister specifically whether the federal government has agreed to allow provincial jurisdiction over the access between the port facilities and the federal railways. Has there been a firm agreement that the provincial government will control this access?

**Mr. Hellyer:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I completely understood the purport of [Mr. Hellyer.]

my hon. friend's question. If he is asking whether there will be equal access to the port by all Canadian railways without discrimination, protecting the shippers in all parts of Canada, the answer is yes.

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question that I have no hesitation in asking. On Friday of last week I asked the Prime Minister about this matter and he suggested I ask the minister when he was back. Therefore I ask him whether as a result of his investigations the questions of financing and jurisdiction are going to be settled.

**Mr. Hellyer:** I hope so, Mr. Speaker. That is the purpose of the inquiry.

**AGRICULTURE****INQUIRY AS TO ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN FARMERS**

On the orders of the day:

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked a question regarding the very serious economic condition of farmers in western Canada. The question was directed to the Minister of Agriculture and also to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I would ask either of these ministers now, who according to the revised roster should be in the house, whether they can answer my question.

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, both these ministers are attending the national grains council in Winnipeg, but there are in the house ministers who will either answer the question or take it as notice.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to know to whom to direct a question. These ministers, according to the roster, are supposed to be here.

**Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Agriculture I would deem it a great privilege to answer that question.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Now we have it shuffled out, Mr. Speaker; the roster has been revised. I know the minister's interest in the west and in agriculture in general, and I should like to ask him what has been done regarding an assessment of the situation in western Canada at the present time by way of preparation for action to be taken to meet this very serious problem.