

Inquiries of the Ministry

Assistance Act in order to remove as far as possible the inequities and anomalies that have been complained of for years as far as that act is concerned, and particularly as far as damage from hail and flooding are concerned.

I would point out to the hon. member that there is a resolution appearing as item No. 9 on today's order paper which reads as follows:

Resolved, that it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Prairie Farm Assistance Act to extend the benefits of the act and to provide further for certain changes in connection with the administration thereof.

I presume the premier of Manitoba, knowing these facts, has stated that the type of damage they have sustained in some parts of Manitoba this year is likely to be covered after the amendments which this resolution precedes have been put through.

GRAIN**DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS—REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF WESTERN REPRESENTATIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I rise on what I believe to be a question of privilege affecting this house. On Thursday of last week, July 10, in reply to questions of mine about deficiency payments and crop conditions in western Canada, the Prime Minister made the statement that discussions were going on with the western provinces as to how a working program could be arrived at, and he had this to say, as reported at page 2093 of *Hansard* of that date:

When a decision is finally arrived at the Minister of Agriculture will place before this house the nature of those agreements to meet the immediate situation.

I have in my hand a newspaper clipping taken from the *Regina Leader-Post* of Saturday, July 12, in which a statement by Mr. Errick Willis, agriculture minister of the province of Manitoba, is reported as follows:

Mr. Willis said the assistance will be given under a federal-provincial agreement signed this week in Ottawa. The agreement is effective from June 23 to March 15, 1959.

The report goes on to spell out in exact detail how certain costs will be divided, and I do not intend to refer in detail to that part of the newspaper report.

It would seem to me that the Minister of Agriculture owes it to this house to make a statement in the house as to any agreement that may have been signed, if such an agreement has in fact been signed, in the normal course of events, but more particularly because of the Prime Minister's statement to the effect that as soon as an agreement was

signed an announcement would be made in the house. I wonder if the minister would tell us if such an agreement has been signed, and whether the report is accurate?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think that Mr. Willis must have been misquoted in this article, because no agreement has been signed.

[Later:]

Mr. Argue: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister of Agriculture has now seen this report, I wonder whether I could ask him if there is any substance whatever to it, and whether the federal government has made any offer to the provincial governments to share the cost of freight on moving fodder to the prairies at this time on a 50-50 basis, and so on, as detailed in this report?

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, the report to which the hon. member refers actually is a summary, as nearly as I can make out, of an offer which the Manitoba government, I think, has already made to the farmers in Manitoba. In regard to assistance in moving fodder, cattle and so on, Mr. Willis and I discussed this matter and consideration is being given to it.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.—CANADIAN USE OF ABANDONED U.S. AIR BASE FACILITIES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. R. Tucker (Trinity-Conception): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Is the minister aware of the intention of the United States air force to deactivate the Pepperrell air force base at St. John's, Newfoundland, and, if so, has the government or the R.C.A.F. considered the possibility of having any of these facilities used by the R.C.A.F.?

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the personnel of the United States air force who have been stationed at Pepperrell are being transferred to other United States air force stations in Newfoundland. The Royal Canadian Air Force have no immediate requirement for the accommodation at Pepperrell, but they do know of the facilities that exist there and these are constantly being reviewed.

STATEMENT ON REPORTED INTERFERENCE WITH PHOTOGRAPHERS DURING NAVAL REVIEW

On the orders of the day:

Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, may I answer a question which was directed to the acting minister of national defence yesterday by the hon.