

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether I can make a statement, or whether [Text]
a colleague of mine can, in a day or two.

AGRICULTURE**REPORTED DECLINE IN CATTLE EXPORTS
AND PRICES**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent, Ont.): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I do not wish at any time to cut off hon. members, but I believe the general custom is, and certainly the rules provide, that once orders of the day are called we should proceed to orders of the day. Perhaps this morning we can give a liberal interpretation to standing orders.

Mr. Danforth: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Agriculture. Is the minister aware of the drastic decrease in exports of cattle to the United States, and may I inquire what he or his department is doing to rectify the situation?

Hon. Harry W. Hays (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the price of cattle in Canada today is higher than any other place in the Americas, both North and South America. In Chicago this morning cattle are selling for less than they are in Toronto. The consumption of beef since June 18 increased by 18 per cent to an all-time high more than one year ago. We are now consuming in the neighbourhood of 23,000 cattle a week in Canada in reds and blues, which is an all-time high.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. Does the minister not agree that the price of cattle has done nothing but decline in the last five months?

Mr. Hays: Mr. Speaker, I think last April the price of cattle did increase until some time in September, when it declined again. But it is at about the same level now as a year ago.

Mr. Danforth: A supplementary question. Are we to infer, then, that no step is being taken to rectify this situation, and that we as cattlemen just have to sit here and absorb this continual lowering of prices?

Mr. Clement Vincent (Nicolet-Yamaska): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question in French to the Minister of Agriculture.

[Translation]

Could the Minister of Agriculture tell us why this year the price of ox and calf raw hides has decreased from 50 to 75 per cent compared with last year?

[Mr. Pearson.]

Mr. Hays: The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that we are eating in the neighbourhood of 6,000 head more cattle, so we have 6,000 more hides, and the population has not increased enough to absorb them in the use of leather goods.

PUBLIC SERVICE**SUPERANNUATED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES—
REQUEST FOR INCREASED PENSIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Will the government during this session be giving consideration to the making of amendments to the Public Service Pension Adjustment Act, or to any other means of increasing the pensions of federal civil servants already retired?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think questions of this kind should now be addressed to the President of the Privy Council, though I am not sure that this one should not wait until the government has made up its mind.

Mr. Douglas: How long will that be?

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, you will realize that until these divisions of functions are sorted out we do not know whether we should ask the President of the Privy Council about matters that he will deal with when he becomes president of the treasury board. May I, therefore, put my question to the President of the Privy Council. Will the government during this session be giving consideration to the making of amendments to the Public Service Pension Adjustment Act or to any other means of increasing the pensions of federal civil servants already retired?

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the government will be giving consideration to this problem because, as the hon. member knows, it is one of great concern to former government employees who are now superannuated. But whether any action will be taken which will involve legislation, I cannot say.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I have a question.

An hon. Member: Ask it tomorrow.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN
REPLY**

The house resumed, from Friday, February 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Jean-Pierre Cote (Longueuil) for an address to