

Inquiries of the Ministry

Does the hon. gentleman intend to agree to the request of the sugar beet producers association and give them a subsidy of at least \$3 per ton?

[Text]

Hon. Harry W. Hays (Minister of Agriculture): That is a matter of government policy which will be dealt with at the proper time.

DECLINE IN FARM PRICES—SUGGESTED
REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): I have a question for the Prime Minister. In view of the serious decline in the prices of farm products such as eggs, poultry and beef, will the Prime Minister refer the operation of the Agricultural Stabilization Act to the agriculture committee for study and recommendation?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): I am sure that in due course the committee will have an opportunity to discuss these matters and consider them.

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT
ORDERS FOR NEW COIN SERIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Would he inquire why hundreds of requests from Canadian collectors for the 1965 Canadian coin series were refused by the royal mint and how it comes about that you can find them being offered for sale across the border by United States collectors?

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): To the last part of the question I would reply that I do not think you can find them on sale.

Mr. Gundlock: Oh yes, you can.

Mr. Gordon: If I may finish my reply, you can find them advertised if, as, and when available. They are advertised for \$12 a set, or something like that and I would strongly advise no one to pay that kind of money.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Eighteen dollars a set.

Mr. Gordon: People will be able to get them from the mint at \$4 a set. Everybody will be able to get them at \$4 a set as soon as production catches up with demand.

On the face of it, the only people who are going to lose out on the present policy are the speculators. Somebody had to lose and I think it is just as well that it be the speculators.

In reply to the first part of my hon. friend's question I would point out it was announced last fall that the orders would be dealt with in the order in which they were received. This has been done in accordance with the ruling made at that time. In the orders received on the first day—and those are the only ones that can be dealt with immediately—there was about the same proportion of orders from other countries as was the case in the past.

I would point out to my hon. friend that this business of collecting coins is something that is international in scope and we would probably resent it quite keenly if our collectors were not given the same privileges when they want to buy sets from the United States or other countries.

Mr. Langlois: Can the minister assure the house that the new sets which will be printed will be exactly the same as those printed so far?

Mr. Gordon: I can give my hon. friend the categorical assurance that all the orders which are put in for the 1965 sets will be filled. I think it would be unwise for me to go further than that.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): As a supplementary question, would the minister give instructions to the mint to give priority to those who placed their orders and had their money returned without their envelopes even being opened?

Mr. Gordon: Mr. Speaker, because of the interest in this subject perhaps I should add something that was set out fully in a press release a couple of weeks ago, a copy of which I will be glad to send my hon. friend. The mint was swamped with something like six million orders. I think that in the whole of the United States last year they had three million orders, and in Canada last year there were less than two million orders. Therefore to get six million orders on the first day was a little more than any ordinary person would have expected the mint to deal with. It was considered unwise to retain on hand these orders, which contained money orders and cash.

It was thought better to return them. I think this was a wise decision because unquestionably some of these orders were from people who perhaps were not as genuine