

Inquiries of the Ministry
FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

AGENDA OF JUNE MEETING—DISCUSSION OF INTERPROVINCIAL FREE TRADE

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. Is there any disagreement over the agenda for the forthcoming constitutional conference in June and, if not, will the Acting Prime Minister table the tentative agenda in the House in order that there can be a focus for public discussion?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe there is now agreement on the agenda. I will check to be quite sure and see whether it would be possible to obtain agreement of all the parties to the conference to release it.

Mr. Ryan: Mr. Speaker, will constitutional clarification in respect of free trade between provinces be considered at the conference?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the principal purpose of the conference will be to carry forward the work that was so well begun in the hope that we will be able to agree on a package proposal for constitutional reform. It was agreed previously that the division of powers between the provinces and the federal government should not be the main part of that package. The practical question of these restraints is one that is, of course, under consideration at all times. It is before the courts and we have put forward a bill which I think would go some distance in helping to solve the immediate problem.

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT POSITION RESPECTING FORMULA
TO AMEND CONSTITUTION

Mr. Georges Valade (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, would the Acting Prime Minister clarify for the benefit of the House one point he raised in his answer: will the federal government refuse to discuss any subject other than the formula for amending the Constitution, or does it intend to consider the substance of the amendments?

[*English*]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, of course we cannot refuse to discuss anything the provinces insist upon discussing, but I do hope we can make progress along the general lines that were agreed to by all governments at the last conference. I am sure hon. members of the House would like to see progress made in order that we can bring our constitution to Canada and deal with practical questions here among ourselves without having to depend upon another legislature.

[Mr. Jamieson.]

AGRICULTURE

HOGS—DISCUSSION OF PRICE SUPPORT WITH PROVINCES

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether during his discussions with the provinces he took up the question of support prices for hogs in view of the fact that two provinces are now subsidizing their hog producers? Has he discussed the possibility of price support under the Agricultural Stabilization Act, and how this could be done effectively?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have had a review made of prices in this current year and compared them with the ten-year moving average on which they are based. They were still above 80 per cent of that ten-year average. As I pointed out to the hon. member a few days ago, we want to be helpful in this situation, if we can change the effective dates of the hog marketing year. But I can also report that indications are that hog prices will start to move up in late July or August.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister to inform the House as to the basis of his forecast that hog prices will increase in August. Would he tell us whose crystal ball he was using?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I am using no one's crystal ball. I am basing this forecast on the statistics we have from both Canada and the United States which indicate that farrowings started a very sharp downward trend about two and a half months ago.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AID FOR REFUGEES FROM EAST PAKISTAN—GOVERNMENT POSITION RESPECTING PAKISTAN

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to return to the problem of Pakistan and India and the refugees. The Secretary of State for External Affairs seemed to be a little general in his previous replies. I should like to ask particularly about the refugees who are apparently there now in large numbers. When does the government of Canada propose to make a decision as to what aid it will render these refugees?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the matter is under discussion at the moment among the various departments and I am hoping that within the next few days we will make a decision as to the amount.

Mr. Stanfield: I have one further supplementary question regarding Pakistan which I understood the minister to suggest was bankrupt because it had declared a moratorium. Is it the policy of the government to continue simply to watch the situation, in which event the government of Pakistan might just disintegrate, or does