

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**AGRICULTURE**

**INQUIRY AS TO ABSENCE OF MINISTER  
FROM HOUSE**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Is it a fact that he did indeed address the Saskatchewan Liberal association in Regina city last Tuesday, November 27?

**Hon. Harry W. Hays (Minister of Agriculture):** Last Tuesday; that is correct.

**Some hon. Members:** You were sick.

**Mr. Nasserden:** As a supplementary question, I wonder could the minister tell us whether he was sick before he went to the meeting, or after?

**Mr. Hays:** Mr. Speaker, I think the day I was absent here was Wednesday, not Tuesday; and they were surely not sick after I spoke to them.

**DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE**

**REPORTED CHANGES IN EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief preamble to my question, which is to the Acting Prime Minister. In a press release from the dominion-provincial conference last night or early this morning it is stated that the additional revenues that will accrue to the provinces are something as follows. In the case of Quebec there will be an additional equalization direct grant of \$35 million and an additional \$7 million in succession duties. In the case of Ontario an additional \$14 million in succession duties only, with no increase in equalization payments. In the case of British Columbia there will be somewhat less than \$4 million out of succession duties, and nothing from equalization payments. I wonder whether the Acting Prime Minister would care to state is this new Liberal formula of mortar for the construction of confederation on into the future?

**Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the preamble to the hon. member's question was unquestionably one which indicated his intention to initiate a debate. I shall not follow in that area but I would say, notwithstanding what the hon. gentleman has said, that in so far as equalization payments are concerned that has been the policy of the government, and has been announced for the last two years. There is

no discrimination toward any province so far as the formula is concerned, and while I was at the conference this morning it seemed to me that with but very few exceptions there seemed to be on the part of the premiers acceptance of the formula.

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** May I ask the Acting Prime Minister why the government has departed from its own announced policy of raising the equalization formula to the level of the wealthiest province, and has brought in extraneous matters such as the consideration of natural resources?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I think that is a matter which is leading into debate, and I can well understand why the hon. gentleman would want to know the answer to the question. I think that should be left for a discussion of the matter, and I understand the Prime Minister will make a statement when he returns to the house on Monday.

**Mr. Stuart A. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke):** The Acting Prime Minister has stated there were two exceptions to the rule of agreement this morning. Would he please advise the house who raised the objections and on what grounds?

**Mr. Chevrier:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the conference is not over yet, and it is one wherein the statements are not made public except those given to the press at the beginning or end of sessions, such as was the case last night. I do not think I should make any further statement or add to my responses to this question.

**INDUSTRY**

**HEAVY WATER PLANT—INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT DECISION**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Industry. Could he now answer the question respecting the heavy water plant in Canada, which was directed to him through the Acting Prime Minister yesterday?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure all hon. members will appreciate that the government has been preoccupied during the past week with matters of substantial national importance, and as a consequence has been unable to give proper consideration to this particular question. I would hope that very early next week a decision will be announced.