

Farm Machinery Prices

are all very much concerned with this question. As I have stated from time to time, the government is certainly looking into the matter of farm machinery prices.

When the hon. member accuses me of being dilatory I wish he would express the dilatoriness in degree. It was only on January 18, not November, that I went out west, so I have only been dilatory to that degree. Also, Mr. Speaker, I certainly sympathize with the hon. member when he says it is singular that with the many, many royal commissions we have appointed in the past few years the rural people have not been getting their share. It seems to me the city dweller has received the major share of the royal commissions.

In this regard I would say that in the best interests of the farm community the matter has to be looked into carefully. I do not think we should jump into royal commissions. We may have had a way of jumping into royal commissions from time to time which has not always been the be-all and end-all of a problem. I think, therefore, that this problem must be looked into very carefully.

With respect to the question of urgency, which I think is the only material question at the present time, I might point out that urgency concerns, of course, the question of whether an opportunity is given by the ordinary rules and procedures of the house to discuss this matter apart from a discussion under standing order 26. I would point out that this matter might have been debated in the budget debate as recently as Friday. It is very difficult for me to see how this continually increasing and augmenting problem has become urgent only since Friday. In my mind the farmer has suffered from this problem for some considerable time, and I am rather surprised to find hon. members opposite actually implying that only since Friday has it become urgent, because of course they could have discussed it in the budget debate as late as Friday.

I would also point out that the agricultural committee is sitting at the present time and considering the estimates of the department, and any discussion of this matter can quite properly be brought before that committee at any time. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, while agreeing most wholeheartedly with the difficulties that our agricultural community faces in this regard and while voicing the concern and resolution of the government to do whatever is necessary to protect the interests of the farmers, I do not believe that at

this time the matter is urgent in the parliamentary sense in that it could have been discussed in the budget debate and hon. members opposite did not see fit to do so and, second, it can be discussed at any time by the agricultural committee in their consideration of the estimates of the department. Therefore in the parliamentary sense I submit that urgency does not exist.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say just a few brief words on this subject. I think all of us, including the minister, agree that this is a matter of public importance and the question that arises concerns the urgency of debate. As I understand it, this means urgency of opportunity. The minister mentioned that the budget debate was completed last Friday and the matter could have been discussed at that time. However, I respectfully submit to Your Honour that the budget debate, as we know, is a limited debate and although government and opposition members in practice take part in it a great many members of the house had no opportunity to speak in that debate. In any event, these motions refer to opportunity of debate in the future, not the past.

As was pointed out by the mover, these rapid increases in price have taken place in the relatively recent past. They have not necessarily taken place since last Friday, but I think I have already disposed of that argument. The big problem, as was so well pointed out by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson), is the question of urgency of debate. We know that the government has certain legislation planned for today and tomorrow and that the redistribution debate is to take place on Wednesday and may last a number of days.

The big problem is to get some kind of inquiry set up now so that this matter can be dealt with. I am quite sure that if the matter were debated today it would not take all day. Points of view could be expressed quite succinctly and briefly and the matter could be disposed of. The government could make an announcement of some sort of inquiry—it is their prerogative whether or not it is by means of a royal commission—and we could then get on with the government business planned for today.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. I am afraid the Chair will have to render another unpopular decision this afternoon. I have listened with great interest and attention, of course, to the representations made by hon. members in