

Inquiries of the Ministry

real, birds are building nests on the wings of some grounded D-C8's. Has the minister reason to think the strike will be over before the eggs hatch?

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTUREMEETING BETWEEN FARM ORGANIZATION
AND FEDERAL MINISTER

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Last week, representatives of the C.F.U. came to Parliament and asked the federal government to improve the dairy policy.

Did the Minister meet these representatives and did he receive representations asking that the dairy policy be improved instead of being allowed to deteriorate?

[*English*]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I did not meet the representatives of the U.C.C. directly, although according to my information a number of members of parliament and one or two cabinet ministers met them. I have had however a number of representations from the U.C.C. and their affiliated organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, with respect to matters raised by the hon. member. I think these meetings were useful in explaining the reasons for the government's regulations for the 1969-70 dairy year.

[*Translation*]

CONTINUATION OF FEED GRAIN SUBSIDIES

Mr. Bernard Dumont (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Could the Minister of Agriculture give us the assurance that the subsidies granted for the transportation of feed grain will be continued in Eastern Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Well, Mr. Speaker, the question as asked would indicate these people wish the Minister of Agriculture to say that these subsidies will be paid in perpetuity. I cannot give that assurance. Certainly governments have to adjust, amend or improve policies from time to time. However there is no intention of withdrawing the subsidy immediately.

[Mr. Schreyer.]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGESREQUEST FOR LAW OFFICERS OPINION ON
CONSTITUTIONALITY OF MEASURE

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Justice a question. Considering the doubt expressed by Hon. J. T. Thorson, who at one time was a member of the Mackenzie King government and who occupied at another time the second highest judicial position in Canada, concerning the constitutionality of certain sections in the languages bill, and that doubt having been expressed by others as well, is the minister prepared, as was done on one occasion within my recollection, to place before the house before the debate on the bill begins the opinion of the law officers of the Crown as to the constitutionality of certain clauses of the bill. Also would he say whether any law professors across Canada were consulted on this matter and asked to give an opinion. Would the minister be prepared to table the opinion of such persons outside his own department?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we take the position on the basis of advice tendered to us by the law officers of the Crown—which advice has been unofficially supported in other quarters—that the bill is constitutional as it stands and that it is within the competence of parliament to enact. It is not the intention of the government to initiate a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: My question did not have to do with that. Would the minister produce the views of the law officers or those outside who he now says actually were approached, so that the house will have the fullest information on this matter as there are grave doubts being expressed?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the right hon. member will appreciate that if despite our best efforts there is a challenge made as to the constitutionality of this bill, any opinions we have received will be privileged. If they were public it might well prejudice the case of the government of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of prejudice of the case. Is there the possibility that the government might be prejudiced?