

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. George H. Hees (Broadview):** I should like to ask a supplementary question. I have not been convinced of the government's determination, and therefore I should like to know if the government intends to proceed with the debate on this matter if the sixth province does not indicate its willingness to join the plan?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is exactly the same question that was asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

**Mr. Knowles:** But I did not get an answer.

**Mr. Speaker:** We have in our rule book a standing order which provides that 48 hours' notice must be given to hon. members so that they will not be taken by surprise when legislation is to be introduced. This is question time. The resolution is on the order paper, and as to when the matter will be proceeded with should be referred to when the business of the house is being discussed at adjournment time and not at question time.

**LIVESTOCK****HOGS—INQUIRY AS TO REASON FOR DROP IN PRICE**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia):** I wonder whether the Minister of Agriculture is in a position to answer my question of yesterday as to the very severe drop in the price of hogs.

**Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture):** I am sure my hon. friend would not expect a mere Liberal to make the necessary inquiry to which he referred yesterday in this short space of time.

**MERCHANDISING****INQUIRY AS TO INVESTIGATION INTO PRICE SPREADS AND MERCHANDISING METHODS**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. E. G. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Can the minister inform the house, in view of the report that the cost of living reached a new high in January, what consideration has been given to the submission of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture that a commission be appointed to investigate the price spreads in the processing and distribution of meat and other farm products?

**Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I can add anything to the answer made by the Prime Minister on February 26 to a similar question asked by the hon. member for Dauphin.

[Mr. Knowles.]

**QUEBEC SAVINGS BANKS ACT****AMENDMENTS RESPECTING RESERVES, LOANS, ETC.**

The house in committee on Bill No. 106, to amend the Quebec Savings Banks Act—Mr. Harris—Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair.

On clause 1—*Copies for shareholders and minister.*

**Mr. Benidickson:** Mr. Chairman, this bill was carefully considered by the banking and commerce committee. In this committee of the whole I see quite a number of members who were present at the sittings of the banking and commerce committee. They will recall that there was very little about this bill that was controversial. Representatives of the banks in question—and there are only two—were present. They were asked if they had any criticism of the proposals and they said no, and they had no reason to give any evidence before the committee. I do not recall that there was before the banking and commerce committee anything that needs extra explanation before this committee of the whole.

**Mr. Macdonnell:** Mr. Chairman, I think the parliamentary assistant has fairly set out what took place before the banking and commerce committee. The only thing I would care to add is that we had the superintendent of banks there who had considered the matter carefully, who recommended the proposed changes and who explained the matter fully. We also had representatives of the banks who answered such questions as were put to them. It is perfectly clear that these institutions which are exclusively savings banks have carried on their operations in a most conservative manner. I think they are now considerably more than a century old. They feel they would like to have two things. First of all, they wanted some expansion or some increase in the figures in certain cases owing to the fact that dollars do not mean what they used to mean. Second, they wanted a little more flexibility in their operations. It seemed to us that the superintendent of banks was clearly correct in indicating that the changes proposed were wise and conservative. As far as I am concerned I think there is nothing more that needs to be added.

**Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Chairman, there is very little to which we object as far as this legislation is concerned. The hon. member for Greenwood talked about the desire of the banks to have additional flexibility. That was one area where perhaps there might be some disagreement because the banks obviously had been making a substantial profit. When there was introduced into the legislation a clause that the ceiling on interest rates would be removed with