

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): There has been a meeting—not the one to which my hon. friend refers—over the last two or three days, of all the provincial authorities who have been administering this bill with the federal officials. I hope to have a full report on it before the week is over, at which time I will make a full report to the house.

[Later:]

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member for Battle River-Camrose in regard to the student loan fund. Can the minister say whether the confusion in the administration of this fund that has existed in southern Ontario, particularly in the city of Toronto, is the fault of the administrator, who I believe was previously his executive assistant?

Mr. Gordon: Mr. Speaker, in the first place I do not accept the premise to the question, and in the second place the suggestion is completely wrong. As my hon. friend should know, the administration of these loans is the responsibility of the provincial governments and—

Mr. Winkler: Who is the administrator?

Mr. Pearson: The Conservative government in Queen's Park.

Mr. Gordon: I do not want to mention names, except to suggest that the one my hon. friend was alluding to was not among them to the best of my knowledge.

AGRICULTURE**OTTAWA VALLEY—EMERGENCY LEGISLATION
RESPECTING DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. J. Greene (Renfrew South): In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture I shall direct my question to his parliamentary secretary. In view of the very grievous and pressing drought condition that exists in the Ottawa valley, I wonder if the Department of Agriculture contemplates any emergency legislation to cover the hardship which is being suffered by the farmers of Renfrew county.

Mr. Speaker: This is a very important question, we all admit, but it is not the type of question which should be asked, it seems to me, on orders of the day.

[Mr. Smallwood.]

Mr. Greene: With respect, Mr. Speaker, this question is current and it is causing hardship at the moment. I give notice that I am going to debate it at ten o'clock.

Mr. C. S. Smallwood (Battle River-Camrose): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Prime Minister if he would look into the situation in the Renfrew area where cattle are suffering from drought and farmers are being forced to sell them. Could he make a report today?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I looked into it and I think the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Agriculture has a statement to make on it.

Mr. B. S. Beer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the government, of course, is always interested in the hardships imposed by virtue of drought and other conditions. On July 20 the government authorized the Minister of Agriculture to enter into agreements with the provinces whereby the federal government would share with the provinces the cost of the moving of fodder and the moving of cattle to market. On August 14 this agreement was entered into with the province of Ontario, and on October 26 with the government of Quebec.

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): As a supplementary question, when the parliamentary secretary is dealing with this question later in the day would he also deal with the drought of income that farmers in eastern Canada are experiencing?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosihern): Mr. Speaker, on November 9, I directed a question to the Prime Minister respecting the disaster situation involving feeder cattle in western Canada. In view of the situation now existing in eastern Canada could the Prime Minister tell us whether the government is going to bring forward legislation to try to cope with this situation that faces the farmers of the country?

Mr. Pearson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the government's legislative intentions will be made known in due course.

[Later:]

Mr. Nasserden: I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Would he bear in mind that "in due course" might be too late for those suffering this disaster?