

Inquiries of the Ministry

view of the fact that the reference in the report on National Film Board affairs commissioned earlier by the minister made only passing reference to the question of user charges on films, will the minister undertake to make a more complete study of this question, one satisfactory to the people concerned with the matter?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, as I said to hon. members, to all those who asked me questions, and as I wrote to them, I think there is a problem. I personally never despair of finding a solution to a problem when I feel there is a problem; I spend all my time searching for solutions. I believe that is precisely what a minister should do. It is also the only answer I can give to that last question.

[English]

AGRICULTURE**PRAIRIE PROVINCES—PROGRAMS TO ASSIST FARMERS**

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of his recognition in his statement of the difficult economic situation in western Canada, and in view of the fact that the government must have been aware of this for some time, can the Prime Minister inform the House in a general way of some of the programs the government has in mind to deal with this situation?

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that the information he is now seeking should normally be given to the House by way of a statement on motions.

Mr. Gleave: A supplementary question. May I ask the Prime Minister whether the government's declared objective of selling 1.3 billion bushels of wheat over three years is still the government's objective?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Halifax-East Hants.

TRANSPORT**DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION—POSSIBLE EFFECT ON GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES**

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my previous question, which is an important one to the municipalities, to the Minister of Finance. Will the grants in lieu of taxation be reduced

[Mr. Burton.]

for any municipality as the result of the pending reorganization of the Department of Transport?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): I would think not, Mr. Speaker, but I had better look into the details to which my hon. friend refers, and perhaps I could talk to him about the matter.

AGRICULTURE**DISCONTINUANCE OF PREMIUM PAYMENTS ON HOG CARCASSES**

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture arising from the recent answer given to a question on the Order Paper with regard to the discontinuance of government premiums on quality hog carcasses. Is the minister in a position to indicate to the House when this program will become effective, or when we may expect a formal announcement in this regard?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a definite date at the moment.

Mr. Mazankowski: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the fact that this move represents a considerable saving to the Department of Agriculture, can the minister say whether this amount will be reallocated within the department? Could he also indicate whether this amount will be earmarked for a program for the early retirement of farmers?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member now has the blue book containing the estimates for the coming fiscal year, and he can read that just as well as I can quote it to him.

FINANCE**MEDICARE—REFUND TO CERTAIN PROVINCES OF MONEY COLLECTED THROUGH SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TAX**

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance, and it has to do with the dominion-provincial conference. In view of the fact that the provinces of British Columbia and Saskatchewan were the only provinces to join medicare on July 1, 1968, would the minister reconsider the answer that he gave yesterday to the other provinces who did not join the medicare plan on that date and refund to those provinces, on a pro rata basis, the money that he collected from the social development tax?