

Agricultural Policies

questions which were directed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) yesterday and to the Minister of Finance the day before regarding this particular issue, and in respect of which there were in fact denials, the Minister of Finance now, without regard to what are his responsibilities to the House, has done what he said he was not going to do and has not done it in the House.

I raise this question now, although it probably will be our intent to raise it again at a later date, because I must now file it by way of a caveat to indicate my strong resentment at this course of action.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): What the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) has just told the House is another example and a clear illustration of the problems that are inflicted on this country.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) has raised a question of privilege which he qualified in two ways, first by saying that he was not prepared to move a motion—which of course makes the raising of a question of privilege clearly out of order—and second, which perhaps made the question of privilege partly acceptable, by saying that he was not going to pursue the matter now and that his question of privilege was based on indecisive and inconclusive press reports. It seems to me it would have been more proper for him to suggest that he would wait until Monday before pursuing the matter further. It is certainly out of order for any other member to allude to this matter as if it were a statement of fact.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) earlier today and thought it was pretty vacuous and vague. Now the Minister of Agriculture, after I have had a chance to utter about six words, anticipates and conjectures that there may be no question of privilege in what I am going to say. This confirms to me how vacant, vague and negative is the mind of the Minister of Agriculture on this occasion, if there is any mind there at all. I used to listen to the—

• (3:20 p.m.)

An hon. Member: Oh, get on.

Mr. Nowlan: The young man from Calgary South can always speak from his seat, where his brains are, but he very rarely gets up—

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Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order. The Chair recognizes that there is nothing before the House at the present time but the motion. I would ask the hon. member to proceed with his speech within the allotted time.

Mr. Nowlan: I would be only too happy to proceed, but the point is that I was dumbfounded when the Minister of Agriculture stood in his place to raise a question of privilege on something I had not even said. If that is the type of prognosis we can expect from the Department of Agriculture—and it is corroborated when you have a Lift program, which is supposed to free so many acres from wheat, and then we try to find out how much wheat we really have—it is an indication of the mentality of the minister.

The first six words that I was able to get out before the heckle-reckle of the vegetable computers over there were that the statement of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) was just another example of the uncertainty that there is in this land about government policy, including agricultural policy. We have statements made in this House one day, two days or three days ago and then in a press conference in the corridor at a press conference in Halifax or at a press conference such as was held in Winnipeg this afternoon we have statements that either complicate or run counter to the substance of statements in this House.

The best example of that was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), who sits right in front of the Minister of Agriculture. Perhaps one has infected the other in their parliamentary prognoses. Anyway, the Minister of Finance stood in his place on Wednesday last and said no, there would be no change in the floating exchange rate when the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) asked that simple question.

I just love to hear from the hon. member for Prince George because the people of B.C. do not hear much from him at all. If he wishes to speak, I will resume my seat. So far as the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) is concerned, I have a few things to say to him. Do you want to ask a question, Otto?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Is the minister rising on a question of privilege or a point of order?

Mr. Lang: Does the hon. member not realize that when a member asks such a stupid question with respect to what the rate of