

Federal-Provincial Conference

mention is made of the banks. The control of finance over the economic life of our country is overlooked and thought is given mostly to downgrade the human person throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Prime Minister will introduce the least controversial legislation possible, which will provide security and personal freedom to every Canadian citizen.

[English]

DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCESTATEMENT AS TO OPENING DATE AND
AGENDA

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I indicated the other day that I would make a short statement on the forthcoming Federal-Provincial Conference. All the Provinces have now agreed that this conference should open in Ottawa on Monday, July 19. It is expected to last for most of that week. I suggest that my letters of April 9 and May 13 to the Provinces concerning the agenda of the conference, together with the replies of the Premiers, might now be tabled.

The agenda of the conference originally proposed by the Federal Government was considerably expanded to meet the requests of the Provincial Governments. This is one of the reasons that the conference was postponed for a few weeks. The agenda is a very comprehensive one. The first item deals with social security. The conference will discuss the ways in which Federal-Provincial action can most effectively contribute to programs that will provide health services to Canadians on a comprehensive basis. It will also consider the basic features of an integrated Canada assistance plan which has been developed in consultation between the Federal and Provincial ministers of welfare.

• (3:00 p.m.)

The second item deals with economic development, and in particular with regional development and programs for the full utilization of human resources and the elimination of poverty, which can play a most important role in the promotion and maintenance of national prosperity and unity. The Federal Government will seek for the most appropriate and effective ways of concerting federal and provincial action in this field.

Under the third item, the Chairman of the Tax Structure Committee will present a progress report on the studies being conducted for the Committee, and the Conference will examine a number of questions related to the work of the Committee which have been

[Mr. Caouette.]

placed on the agenda at the request of various provinces.

Of the remaining items some, such as item 4 concerning transportation and item 5 concerning inland water resources, have been placed on the agenda at the request of interested provinces. Some of the other items, such as item 6 relating to federal-provincial co-operation to combat organized crime and item 7 on liaison arrangements, which were originally proposed by the Federal Government, have been expanded in scope to take into account the views of provinces.

QUESTIONS

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

INVESTIGATION INTO CONTROL OF
MASS MEDIA**Question No. 8—Mr. Fisher:**

1. Has the attention of the Prime Minister or Members of the Cabinet been drawn to resolutions or requests by organizations such as the Saskatchewan Farmers Union asking for an investigation into the control of mass media in Canada, and particularly the press ownership on the Prairies?
2. If so, has the government any official reaction to the resolutions or requests?
3. Does the government consider that it has the constitutional authority to make such an investigation?
4. Does the work of the Combines Investigation Branch or the restrictive trades practices commission enable them on a continuing basis to appraise trends toward consolidation of ownership in the mass media, and particularly with the press?

Hon. Maurice Lamontagne (Secretary of State): 1. No.

2. Not applicable.

3. This would depend upon the nature and purpose of the investigation.

4. Bearing in mind the size of the Combines Branch and the responsibilities of the senior staff in its day to day operations, it is not feasible to attempt on a continuing basis to appraise trends toward consolidation of the ownership in the mass media generally but it does do so in the case of newspapers and magazines. In this respect it should be noted that the jurisdiction of the Branch does not extend to acquisitions in the fields of television and radio broadcasting media. In the normal course of its operations, the Branch gives consideration to acquisitions in the field of newspapers and magazines for the purpose of determining whether they raise any question under the Combines Investigation Act and where the Director has reason to believe that the Act has been or is about to be violated, he takes action as required by the statute.