

## Oral Questions

## GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

## AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF PRAIRIE FARM ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR MINISTERIAL OFFICE IN REGINA—POSSIBILITY OF REPAYMENT

**Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I do not like to break up a discussion, but I want to ask a question of the President of the Treasury Board. Was the decision made by the Cabinet, the Minister of Agriculture or the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and, if not, who did authorize the use of Prairie Farm Assistance Funds for a ministerial office in Regina with an absolute disregard for that which is honest?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I did not catch the question because my little machine was not working.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Towers:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might repeat my question incorporating a supplementary question. Was the decision made by the Cabinet, the Minister of Agriculture or the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and, if not, who did authorize the use of Prairie Farm Assistance Funds for a ministerial office in Regina with an absolute disregard for that which is honest? Will the minister take responsibility for the return of those misappropriated funds to the PFAA account, or will judicial action be required?

[Translation]

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I know nothing about that problem. I shall look into the matter and report to the House. I am quite surprised at the strong language the hon. member is using under the circumstances.

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[English]

## TRANSPORT

## REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE FEED FREIGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM NOT TERMINATED

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Ministers of Agriculture, Transport and Justice—

**An hon. Member:** And quite a few others.

**Mr. MacLean:** —I should like to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. Will he assure the House that it is not the intention of the government in the near future to terminate the Feed Freight Assistance Program in as far as it affects eastern Canadian farmers?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard of no such intention. Of course, the government may find it desirable to modify the program, but as far as I know it will continue.

**Mr. MacLean:** Mr. Speaker, will the Acting Prime Minister discuss the matter with his colleagues and contact the responsible agricultural organizations in the eastern provinces as well as in British Columbia in order to

[Mr. Hees.]

appraise the magnitude of the disastrous effect this would have on some segments of agriculture, especially in Nova Scotia and in New Brunswick?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that there have been discussions for a year with the provincial authorities about extending this program, so they are very well informed.

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## NATIONAL DEFENCE

## ALLEGED STATEMENTS OF ADMIRAL BOYLE CONCERNING STATE OF THE NAVY—SUGGESTED APPEARANCE AS WITNESS BEFORE COMMITTEE

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence and it arises out of a statement reported at length in the *Globe and Mail* this morning and referred to earlier by another hon. member. This statement was made by Admiral Boyle, and I might say that it was a most courageous statement.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** In view of the circumstances of the statement, to the effect that our defences in so far as naval matters are concerned are, to say the least, weakened to a degree that is dangerous to the defence of this country, will the minister assure Canadians that instead of having his Chief of General Staff communicate with him, will he now convene a meeting of the Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, which will be open to the public, in order that Admiral Boyle may be asked questions concerning those matters which are of concern to all Canadians? I ask this in order that with Admiral Boyle's record of service he will be given the opportunity of warning Canadians about these matters now instead of later.

**Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I have read the press accounts of what Admiral Boyle said but I do not want to comment fully on his statements until I have had an opportunity of talking with him. I would like to say in reply to the right hon. gentleman that a large part of what Admiral Boyle said is something I can agree with; he does in fact confirm statements I made here before the committee of the whole House last week when I talked about the growing danger from the Warsaw Pact and from Soviet naval strength in the Atlantic. In that sense the admiral was confirming government policy and statements I have made. However, Mr. Speaker, in looking at the press reports it appears to me that Admiral Boyle did go beyond his authority when he spoke about the activities of other government departments, and it is in that area that I wish to talk with him.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Now that we have narrowed it down, Mr. Speaker, apparently the minister has no objection to what the admiral said concerning the weaknesses of the navy, the shortage of money and the inability to carry out its responsibilities, but some other matter that was men-