

**Mr. Hees:** Oh, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** In spite of the hon. member's plea, I must say it is not in order to ask ministers or the government to confirm or deny rumours or reports. The question can be asked directly, but certainly it is not procedurally acceptable to ask whether or not a statement is correct or true.

**Mr. Hees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the rumours have been so persistent during the last few days I think the Prime Minister would like to answer.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Even if the hon. member is more persistent than the rumours he cannot ask the question.

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### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

#### TAKEOVER OF RYERSON PRESS BY UNITED STATES COMPANY

**Mr. John Burton (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the fact this is the last day on which action can be taken to retain Canadian control of Ryerson Press, will the minister indicate whether the government has reconsidered its previous approach to this matter and is going to take action to prevent this sale?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Yes and no.

**Mr. Burton:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate whether the government is considering including provisions in its revision of the Combines Investigation Act which would prevent such sales, and can he also indicate when this bill will be available to the House?

**Mr. Basford:** As I made clear, we are in the course of revising the Combines Investigation Act. Of course, it would not be proper for me to say what will be in the revised Act before it is brought before Parliament.

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### AGRICULTURE

#### INQUIRY AS TO LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE AID TO FARMERS LEAVING LANDS

**Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture related to statements the minister has made, the latest before the National Farm Congress, dealing with proposed government financial and other aid to farmers leaving their lands. I wonder whether the minister can give any indication as to when legislation dealing with this matter will be introduced in the House?

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** No, Mr. Speaker; I cannot give a precise date but I can repeat the hope I have expressed many times that it will be soon.

### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

#### FARM PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION—REPORTED STATEMENT BY MINISTER CONCERNING CONTROL

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. Is it his intention to introduce further legislation, in addition to Bill C-176, to translate into action the minister's reported remarks, namely that in future all farm production and distribution will be determined by the government, that decisions in this regard will be taken completely out of the hands of farmers and farm organizations, as is done in the Soviet Union?

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has never made such a statement and the one press report that I saw to that effect I thought was journalism at its worst.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION PROCEDURE

**Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, in view of complaints by provincial ministers of agriculture and farm organization spokesmen that there has been lack of consultation between these organizations and the two ministers involved in agricultural policy, can the minister assure the House that proper or workable consultation procedure will be set up between the federal government, farm organizations and provincial governments so there may be some understanding between them on the formation of agricultural policy.

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think the congress we had last week went a long way towards satisfying effective procedure for consultation. Many of the provincial ministers, as well as leaders of farm organizations, indicated to me that this was a very useful exercise in that regard.

**Mr. Gleave:** I have a supplementary question. In view of reported statements that a program involving the retirement of farmers and, indeed, substantial acquirement of land is to be followed, has there been consultation with farm organizations and leaders on this program? Will this type of consultation be followed before such a program is started, so that we will not need another congress to discuss it after it has been in operation.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one of the most useful ways to have consultation is for one side or the other to put forward a proposal. When I have a proposal which will set out the policy as far as the federal government is concerned, obviously and naturally we will put it to the provincial governments and farm organizations in order that they may give us their views.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I suggest we should not get involved in a debate, but before going to another subject the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Lambton-Kent.

**Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the comment he just