

*Inquiries of the Ministry*DISCONTINUANCE OF SUBSIDY ON WHEAT FOR  
FLOUR PRODUCTION—QUESTION AS TO PRICE  
OF BREAD

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. E. G. McCullough (Assiniboia):** I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, or to the Minister of Finance, to both of whom I have sent notice. As the result of the discontinuance of the government subsidy on wheat going into the production of flour, is it expected that there will be a general increase in the price of bread throughout Canada?

**Hon. Douglas Abbott (Minister of Finance):** The discontinuance of the subsidy of 46½ cents a bushel will of course result in an increase in the price of flour. There may be some items entering into the making of bread, the cost of which is down. The competitive situation in the baking industry is quite good in most parts of Canada—

**Some hon. Members:** Where?

**Mr. Abbott:** —and I would not care to hazard a guess whether the discontinuance of the subsidy will result in any general increase in the price of bread.

**Mr. Coldwell:** What about the McGregor report?

INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT—REQUEST  
FOR TABLING OF REPORT

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. J. Bentley (Swift Current):** Will the Minister of Trade and Commerce at an early day table a report showing the number of nations who have signed the international wheat agreement, and their obligation to accept or sell wheat under that agreement?

**Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** I received the report only this morning. I will table it early next week.

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—CHANGE IN PERSONNEL

**Hon. Alphonse Fournier (Minister of Public Works)** moved:

That the name of Mr. Benidickson be substituted for that of Mr. Howe; and that the name of Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) be substituted for that of Mr. Hartt; and that the name of Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf) be substituted for that of Mr. Arsenault; and that the name of Mr. Jutras be substituted for that of Mr. Dionne (Beauce) on the select standing committee on public accounts.

Motion agreed to.

RAILWAYS AND SHIPPING—CONCURRENCE IN  
FIRST REPORT

**Mr. S. M. Clark (Essex South)** presented the first report of the sessional committee on railways and shipping owned, operated [Mr. Wright.]

and controlled by the government, and moved that the report be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

## PRIVATE BILLS

## FIRST READINGS—SENATE BILLS

Bill No. 124, to incorporate The North West Commercial Travelers Association of Canada.—Mr. Maybank.

Bill No. 125, to incorporate The Sisters of Saint Elizabeth Hospital.—Mr. Burton.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

SASKATOON AIRPORT HOSPITAL—TRANSFER OF  
PATIENTS TO OTHER QUARTERS

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon City):** I should like to address a question to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. In view of the report that patients of the temporary veterans hospital at the airport at Saskatoon are to be moved to other quarters, is the minister prepared to make a statement on the whole subject?

**Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** I am in touch with the situation referred to by the hon. member. I can assure him that the interests of the veteran patients are being safeguarded. I will take his question as notice and give an answer early next week.

## NEWFOUNDLAND

CALLING OF BY-ELECTIONS TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION  
IN PARLIAMENT

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Gordon Graydon (Peel):** In view of the fact that the formalities necessary to the union of Newfoundland and Canada have been practically completed, can the Prime Minister tell the house when the government intends to call by-elections in Newfoundland in order that the people may have representation in this house as soon as possible?

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** In spite of the statement made by the hon. member for Peel, the government of Canada has not yet any jurisdiction over Newfoundland.

**Mr. Graydon:** If that be so, under what authority are civil servants of Canada now working in Newfoundland and setting up governmental machinery there?

**Mr. St. Laurent:** In view of the certainty now that some of the laws of Canada will be proclaimed in Newfoundland on the expiration of the last minute of the 31st of March, preparations are being made to the end that

*Agricultural Products Act*

those laws may be administered as soon as they are proclaimed.

**Mr. Graydon:** Is there any reason why you should not prepare for the by-elections too?

**ACCIDENTS****AUTOMOBILES, LEVEL CROSSINGS, ETC.—  
OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. T. L. Church (Broadview):** Will the government give consideration to allowing part of a morning, afternoon or evening for consideration of the question of the huge loss of life and the economic loss in Canada resulting from accidents involving motor-cars, level crossing accidents, fires in homes, drownings and other fatal accidents?

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** No doubt there will be opportunity to discuss these very important subjects, but there are on the order paper already matters of considerable urgency which will have to be dealt with first.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF MARCH 11 AND 17—  
RETURN TO STANDING ORDER 15—PRIVATE  
AND PUBLIC BILLS**

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister with respect to a matter of procedure. If perchance we conclude this afternoon, let us say, the debate on the agricultural measure which is now before us, would that not mean that the orders of the house passed on March 11 and March 17 would lapse and we would then come back to the terms of standing order 15? If so, would private and public bills not be taken up from eight until nine o'clock this evening?

**Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister):** That would be my interpretation of the rules, Mr. Speaker, but of course it is Your Honour and not the leader of the house who has the final say in interpreting them. My interpretation would be that the orders to which the hon. member has referred would lapse, and that the standing order would then come into play.

**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS ACT****EXTENSION OF OPERATION FOR A PERIOD OF  
ONE YEAR**

The house resumed from Thursday, March 24, consideration of the motion of Mr. Gardiner for the second reading of Bill No. 126, to amend the Agricultural Products Act.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Last night I agreed to lay on the table copies of three food contracts with the United Kingdom. I should like to do so now; they have just come to hand.

**Mr. John Bracken (Neepawa):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset I wish to thank hon. members for the courtesy extended to me by permitting the adjournment of this debate last night. I am afraid my thanks may tax the patience of the house this morning, because in what I have to say I may not be brief. The subject of export markets for agricultural products is very important, but I shall try not to delay the house unduly.

The measure before us is called an act to amend the Agricultural Products Act. It proposes the extension for another year of the present act, which we first passed in 1947. That act of 1947, however, was the continuation of a policy started in Canada not in 1947 but ten years ago, in 1939. That policy was one of state trading between the government of this country and, mainly, the government of the United Kingdom. In order to carry out that policy the Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of the government, was given dictatorial powers, which were spoken of by some at the time as blank cheque powers. It is that legislation we are now asked to extend for another year. As it stands at present the legislation terminates at the end of this month. The bill now before us is designed to prolong its life till March 31, 1950.

I have listened with interest to the debate thus far. I wish to compliment those who have spoken on the way in which they brought forward their points of view with respect to the measure before us. I must confess to some surprise, however, that the major aspect of the problem, namely, agricultural export markets, has not been emphasized to the extent I think it should have been. I refer particularly to the preservation of the market in the United Kingdom for our surplus agricultural products.

In my judgment this country is facing the most serious economic problem it has ever been called upon to face. It is the problem of the steadily worsening position of all our export markets for all our agricultural products. I was going to say "with the exception of wheat", but since the announcement of the international wheat agreement I question whether that commodity should be excepted from that statement, because even with wheat the government is agreeing to provide 30 million bushels less per year than was suggested in a previous draft agreement. It is to the export markets aspect of the Canadian agricultural problem that I wish to devote my time this morning.