

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

AGRICULTURE**CORN—INQUIRY AS TO ASSISTANCE TO
ONTARIO GROWERS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question I should like to direct to the Minister of Agriculture. Would the minister now report to the house what plans he has in mind to assist the corn growers of south-western Ontario who are presently suffering a near disaster, and are suffering more and more each day? In this regard can he also tell the house how the conversations with the United States government are proceeding in connection with exercising some control over the importation of United States corn?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has asked several questions.

Mr. Nesbitt: Just two.

Mr. Olson: First, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that in his budget speech the Minister of Finance indicated that the government is going to provide for accelerated depreciation on storage facilities, which will be helpful in the long run in view of the corn marketing problem at the moment in southern Ontario.

In reply to the second part of his question I would say that negotiations have been going on with United States officials, and I expect that perhaps within a few hours, but certainly very shortly, I will be in a position to make an announcement in connection with the import competitive factors involved in the marketing problem.

**REQUEST FOR ACCELERATED DEPRECIATION
ON GRAIN DRYING EQUIPMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Finance. Would he agree, in light of the harvesting conditions in western Canada and the large volume of tough and damp grain stored on farms, to adding a further provision for accelerated depreciation on equipment that is used for grain drying?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I must admit ignorance with respect to what equipment is used for grain drying—I believe it is elevator equipment—but I would be very pleased to look into the matter. If my hon. friend will meet with me privately and inform a poor fellow from [Mr. Trudeau.]

a small town what equipment is involved, then I would be pleased to look into the question.

Mr. Benjamin: A supplementary question for clarification, Mr. Speaker. I am referring to grain dryers that farmers purchase for use on their farms before the grain is stored in bins. Would the minister allow some accelerated depreciation on this equipment, as well as on storage equipment?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I have great sympathy for the farmers of western Canada and for the particular problems they have at this time, and I would be pleased to look into the matter that has been raised by the hon. member.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister with regard to this problem. Is the minister now in a position to say that special quota privileges will be given to farmers who are attempting to harvest damp grain this fall, such as was the case in 1953 when conditions were very similar to those of this year?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, this question should be directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who reports to this house for the Canadian Wheat Board. I believe the minister has already announced that the wheat board have taken extraordinary measures to deal with the extraordinary situation created by this tough and damp grain.

Mr. Horner: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Is the government going to make special delivery quotas available to farmers who are now harvesting damp grain, such as was the case in former years?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, It appears to me that the situation today is very different from that of previous years when such steps were taken. In previous years the damp grain was found in certain areas only; today the situation is fairly broadly generalized. Therefore up to now we have felt that there is no possibility of doing what was done in the past.

Mr. Horner: A further supplementary. Are the wheat board and the minister's department making grain drying facilities available at the terminals to aid in drying the grain?