

the various possibilities that might be considered to prevent the death of the town and its only industry?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet received such a request, but if I do, of course I shall be happy to meet them.

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[*English*]

GRAIN

ALLEGED LOSS OF SALES BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE TERMINAL FACILITIES AT VANCOUVER—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON PLANS

Mr. Cliff Downey (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. It arises from the fact that Canadian export officials have stated that Canada is making no new sales because of the inability to meet present commitments and the fact that there are 20 ships idle in Vancouver harbour because there is no grain in storage there. Would the minister be prepared as early as tomorrow to make a statement on motions concerning what he is doing in the short term to take care of this critical situation and on the long-term policy to prevent this situation happening again?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's indication of fact that there are no sales being made is simply not a fact. This is untrue. The Canadian Wheat Board is continuing to sell grain. They have, of course, for certain months and periods of months sold to an absolute physical maximum out of the port of Vancouver. It is one of the long-term challenges to develop additional facilities at that port for what now appears to be a clear additional sales possibility through the west. There are a significant number of boats waiting at the moment. The unloads of grain, however, have in the last couple of days reached the target which the Wheat Board has set for the railways to achieve a catch-up, with 817 unloads on Thursday and around 800 on Friday. It will still take some time to catch up. The delay was due in part to the selling of a very large quantity of grain and the late arrival of boats which would have resulted in delays in loading in any case. The very severe winter snowfall conditions also delayed grain in arriving at Vancouver. The Wheat Board has the situation in hand, however, and it will be improving shortly.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to resort to facts again after he receives the salesman of the year award?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Moose Jaw on a supplementary.

POSSIBLE RENOVATION OF GOVERNMENT TERMINAL ELEVATOR AT VANCOUVER TO EXPEDITE SHIPMENT

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, can the minister say whether or not it is correct that Canada has lost a sale of 150,000 tons of wheat to Japan because the Canadian Wheat Board could not ensure delivery?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows he cannot ask a question in those terms.

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might rephrase it. In view of the fact that there is a problem in delivery of grain at the west coast for overseas shipment, can the minister say whether the government terminal elevator at Vancouver is now being renovated so that it can be used in the future?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, no one considers that that would be an immediate practical solution. The Wheat Board is examining every possible solution to increase our capacity, including cleaning grain in the interior and putting it through the terminals without cleaning it there. But the use of that terminal is not practical in terms of the expense required to put it into operational shape.

SUGGESTED MEETING OF WHEAT BOARD AND RAILWAY OFFICIALS TO EXPEDITE MOVEMENT

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): I should also like to ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I notice the minister continually refers to grain and not to wheat. My question arises from the other questions, particularly in respect of the Palliser group which said that the terminals are empty at Vancouver and short 20 million bushels and that wheat sales have been lost. Would the minister consider getting together the export officials, the officials of the Wheat Board and the railways to see if this can be remedied now and not tomorrow?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, that has been done. It has been done a long time ago and on a continuing basis. The increase of unloads to 800 to which I referred a moment ago has resulted from the railways co-operating with the new targets set by the Wheat Board above the 600 or 700 achieved earlier. I can also say that the terminals have now agreed to go on a seven-day work week basis, which previously they had not, in order to increase further the total unloads of wheat. There is co-operation on all sides, I am happy to say.

POSSIBLE PREFERENCE TO SHIPMENT OF WHEAT OVER RYE, FLAX AND RAPESEED

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether shipments of rye, flax and rapeseed from elevator points are being slowed down in order to give preference to wheat for delivery to the west coast?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I would have to investigate whether any changes in the shipping program were made. The objective of the Wheat Board and the block shipment system is in every case to arrange for the loading of grain which is most required for the ships that are expected to arrive or have arrived at Vancouver.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre on a supplementary.