

*Oral Questions*DOMESTIC WHEAT—SUBSIDY TO MILLERS—EFFECT ON
WESTERN FARMERS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, since the House has had a variety of explanations from the minister concerning this matter I should like to find out whether or not this is the final one. Three weeks ago it was stated that there was a reduction in the subsidy to millers from \$1.04 a bushel to \$1. The next step was an increase from \$1 to \$1.25 and then it went up to \$1.75. Now we have a revised version, not given in parliament but in Regina or Winnipeg. Would the minister say whether or not under this latest plan the farmers of western Canada will actually be subsidizing consumers to the extent of 72 cents a bushel?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the latest world price for wheat that I know of is \$5.62 a bushel, so there is no relationship between the hon. member's figure and any other. The policy of the government has been to try to work toward orderly marketing of both domestic and international grain. I know that at least some of the colleagues of the right hon. gentleman would agree that if we could get a \$3.25 to \$5 international grains arrangement we would be doing very well indeed and the producers would be very happy with that. The government has introduced this form of price level for a seven-year period for domestic wheat, that 10 per cent or so over which we have some control. At the same time, because of the rapid recent rise in prices and the importance of bread in the diet, we have introduced a consumer subsidy which will be in the order of about \$100 million.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the simplicity of the question required a simple answer. Is it not a fact that under the revised scheme, which is a revision of a revision of a revision, the western farmer will be taken for a ride to the extent of subsidizing every bushel of wheat used in Canada for flour to the tune of 72 cents?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no; the right hon. gentleman is entirely incorrect.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the right hon. gentleman and then I would hope to recognize the hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, if I am wrong I want to be corrected, but I want the truth, not the antithesis of the truth. What is the reduction in amount that each and every farmer will receive per bushel for wheat consumed in Canada under the revised version that has now been produced? I want to know how many cents per bushel. Is that too difficult?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the right hon. gentleman that the floor of \$3.25 is about \$1.25 higher than the best average price ever received for wheat by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Nielsen: Answer the question.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Lang: This will offer very significant protection to producers, to such an extent that the Canadian Wheat Board has preferred this protection for seven years rather than five.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The statement of the minister is completely misleading.

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CANADIAN COASTGUARD

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED
TRANSFER OF COLLEGE FROM CAPE BRETON

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact that negotiations between the Canadian Coastguard College and St. Francis Xavier University over the past two years have led to approval in principle of the establishment of a degree in navigational science, is the minister reconsidering the transfer of the Coastguard College academic programs from Cape Breton?

● (1430)

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have different proposals before us which we are studying now, but in none of those proposals will the Coastguard College at Sydney be degraded in one way or another in terms of numbers or quality of teaching.

Mr. Muir: This is an old song up to the present time, but time will tell. Has the minister indicated when he will be available to meet the delegation from Cape Breton on the retention and expansion of the Coastguard College on Cape Breton Island and, if so, on what date will such meeting take place?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the minister might reply briefly to the question. The hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys will, I am sure, appreciate that the question is hardly in order but, the question having been asked, the minister should be given an opportunity to reply.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I will check my agenda and tell the hon. member tomorrow.

Mr. Muir: I rise on a point of order. I hesitate to disagree with you, Mr. Speaker, because you are generally right, but I think it is most important that we in Cape Breton know whether the minister is willing to give us a few moments of his time in which to plead our case as he is trying to remove the Coastguard College from Cape Breton Island to possibly Ottawa or Cornwall.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the minister will not hear the hon. member, I will listen to him.