

Inquiries of the Ministry

conveyed to the Wheat Board on behalf of the government the latter's willingness to make up the difference between the price received by the Wheat Board and the floor price under the International Grains Arrangement, \$1.95½ a bushel f.o.b. Fort William?

Mr. Pepin: My discussions and the Prime Minister's discussions with the Wheat Board were connected with the efforts made by the Wheat Board to market wheat internationally. I do not think I should be asked to report on that. With respect to the government making up the difference between the I.G.A. minimum price and the present and future price, this would have to be a government decision. As the Acting Prime Minister stated, we are obviously working at preventing a government commitment too high to contemplate. Any success that we have in preventing a downward movement will result in less compensation being requested from the government in the future.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): May I ask a further—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands might be allowed a further supplementary. Other hon. members are anxious to ask supplementary questions on the same subject.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): My supplementary will be brief, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact the crop year has only two more weeks to run, how soon will the government reach a decision with respect to guaranteeing the farmers the minimum price established under the I.G.A.?

Mr. Pepin: The Acting Prime Minister has already answered that.

COMPETITIVE POSITION OF REDUCED
WHEAT BOARD PRICES

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the schedule of wheat prices which the minister tabled a little earlier today shows No. 1 reduced 5½ cents, No. 2, 7 cents, No. 3, 10 cents, and Nos. 4 and 5 only one cent each, I ask the minister whether these prices are now competitive with those being charged by the United States, Australia and the other wheat exporting countries?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, that is [Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.)

much too complicated to answer in the question period because the situation varies in different parts of the world. It varies because of so many different circumstances that it is unfair to expect me to give an answer. The general attitude in the world of exporters at this time is that through "advantages" they had some exporters have gained more than what I might call their fair expectations and others have not. The purpose of the exercise is to try to equalize advantages by price "adjustments" and co-operation.

Mr. Harkness: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister not able to say that these prices are competitive? Are sales actually being made at the present time at these prices? Have the government and the Wheat Board made a firm decision to continue to meet prices if they continue to fall?

Mr. Pepin: This decision was made on March 14. It applies today, it applied yesterday and it will apply tomorrow. But as I said one day to the right hon. member for Prince Albert, we are trying to be competitive at the highest possible level and not at the lowest possible level. Again we are trying to be competitive at the highest possible level.

Mr. Harkness: The minister did not answer the question whether sales are actually being made at these prices. If so, can the minister say whether two or three such sales have been made?

Mr. Pepin: I am being asked to give market information. A couple of weeks ago a rather important sale of 7.5 million bushels was made to Peru. That sale was made by the Wheat Board with the full co-operation of the credit facilities provided by the Canadian government.

GRAIN

WHEAT—ABILITY OF GRAIN HANDLING SYSTEM TO ABSORB FIVE BUSHEL QUOTA

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): I wish to direct a further question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As a result of the minister's meetings with the Canadian Wheat Board, can he give the house any assurance that the grain system will be able to take in the five-bushel quota as of August 1?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I have before me the usual daily report on progress made. I have been very generous in showing these reports. It is still the opinion of the board that it can