

Stanstead (Mr. Hackett) and questions asked by the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Jutras) and the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) in reference to the employment of German prisoners of war in the sugar beet industry, but the orders of the day were not reached in time to enable me to reply before.

I am glad to say that with the cooperation of my colleague the Minister of National Defence, Navy and Army (Mr. Abbott) an additional 400 prisoners of war have been made available for the cultivation of sugar beets. Two hundred will be allotted to Ontario and 200 to Manitoba. This means that we shall have a total of 1,222 prisoners of war working on sugar beets in Ontario, 1,116 in Manitoba, 1,449 in Alberta, with others making up a total of 4,000 doing work at various points in the country.

It should be explained that the distribution of these prisoners of war is decided upon by the representatives of the provincial and federal agriculture departments and not by the Department of Labour.

As I have indicated, most of these prisoners of war will be employed on the cultivation of sugar beets. The allocation to southwestern Ontario is considered ample to assure the production required.

Mr. HACKETT: Can the minister say when the two hundred additional prisoners of war mentioned in his answer will be sent to the beet growing industry of southwestern Ontario?

Mr. MITCHELL: I think the question should be asked, when will they be sent home? However I may say to my hon. friend that my understanding is that they are on the way now.

STRIKES IN VARIOUS TRADES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Bigar): Is the minister in a position to make a statement to-day in regard to the seamen's strike, the loggers' strike, and the threatened strike of steelworkers?

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): All I can say about the seamen's strike is that the ship operators are meeting in Toronto to-day. As to British Columbia, I am constantly in touch with the provincial authorities, and the situation there is just the same as it was last week.

IMMIGRATION

REQUEST FOR COPIES OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT OF MAY 29

On the orders of the day:

Hon. GROTE STIRLING (Yale): May I ask the Minister of Mines and Resources if he would have copies made of the statement on immigration which he made on May 29 last? Letters are beginning to arrive from people who desire to get relatives out and the simplest way to reply to them would be to send a copy of that statement.

Hon. J. A. GLEN (Minister of Mines and Resources): The hon. gentleman is suggesting that I should have copies made for distribution among the members?

Mr. STIRLING: Yes.

Mr. GLEN: I will do that.

BEEF

INQUIRY AS TO RETAIL PRICE CEILING INCREASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. A. McMASTER (High Park): In view of the fact that the wholesale ceilings on both red and blue brand beef have advanced four cents a pound, will the Minister of Finance consider raising the retail ceiling, allowing a corresponding increase in the retail sale price to allow the retail butcher a fair margin of profit?

Right Hon. J. L. ILSLEY (Minister of Finance): I would not like to give any encouragement whatever to the idea that the retail ceiling on beef may be raised. The wholesale ceiling on red and blue brand beef were adjusted a few weeks ago as an experimental measure. There has been much dispute whether the retail margin was too great or not. If the present arrangement is not working out well, consideration will have to be given to something better, but as I said at the beginning I cannot encourage at all the idea that there will be any raising of the retail price.

Mr. LOCKHART: Are deputations coming to Ottawa to discuss this matter?

Mr. ILSLEY: I do not know.

COAL

DOMESTIC FUEL SUPPLY SITUATION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Reconstruction and Supply): Mr. Speaker, I desire to make a brief statement on the coal situation.