

Mr. MacInnis: Will this include the provision for veterans preference?

Mr. Kierans: We observe all the regulations of the public service act.

GRAIN

WHEAT—REQUEST FOR FLOOR PRICE EQUALLING I.G.A. MINIMUM

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): May I address my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Mr. Speaker? In view of the fact that a motion has been passed unanimously in the Saskatchewan legislature urging the federal government to guarantee farmers a floor price for export wheat equal to the minimum price of the International Grains Arrangement, and the institution of a domestic price for wheat of \$1 a bushel above that figure, will the minister and the government give this request immediate and active consideration?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Of course we shall, Mr. Speaker, but as I have said repeatedly, there are real hopes that we shall return to the I.G.A. price schedule, and every effort is being made toward that objective now. So I think these gentlemen are anticipating a situation which may not develop to the extent they fear.

Mr. Gleave: May I point out to the minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member may not point things out to the minister; he can only ask questions.

Mr. Gleave: Then may I rephrase what I have to say? In view of the fact that Wheat Board offering prices are now lower than at any time during the life of the International Grains Arrangement, will the minister give this motion careful thought?

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since wheat is now being sold below the floor price quoted under the International Grains Arrangement, is it the intention of the government to make up to the Wheat Board the losses which will be incurred during this period, until such time as we are able to get back to the schedule of prices contained in the agreement?

Mr. Pepin: I apologize for having to use the formula that this would be a matter of government policy to be announced in due course.

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Inquiries of the Ministry

WHEAT—PRICE DISCUSSIONS AT LONDON MEETING

Mr. A. B. Douglas (Assiniboia): Can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce tell the house what progress was made toward settling this price dispute at the meeting held in London on Monday and Tuesday of this week?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I have a short report from that meeting, Mr. Speaker. The committee acknowledged that a serious price situation has developed, particularly in recent weeks, and agreed that appropriate action should be taken as soon as possible to strengthen and maintain the International Grains Arrangement. The committee concluded that the pricing problem should be dealt with initially by exporters, and agreed to adjourn its meeting and to reconvene as soon as practicable, following the exporters meeting, which is to take place early in April.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

VANCOUVER—PERMANENT EMPLOYEES TO REPLACE THOSE HAVING CASUAL STATUS

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): My question is related to the questions asked earlier about the Post Office. Since the Postmaster General promised that with the introduction of the five-day week the need for casual employees would diminish, can he advise the house how soon we may expect that some of the 600 successful applicants for postal positions will replace casual employees, numbering over 100, in the Vancouver post office?

Hon. Eric W. Kierans (Postmaster General): In Vancouver, as in many other post offices, we have to take account of our own permanent employees and provide them with new positions first. I was not aware that 600 people had filed successful applications, but given the present employment situation in the Post Office and the fact that we have to find employment for approximately 2,000 of our own people it will be some time before we engage any new or additional help.

Mr. Rose: A supplementary question. The minister indicated to the house the other night that the casual workers would be gradually phased in as regular employees by April 1. Does he still feel that if some of the 600 successful applicants were casuals he will meet the April 1 deadline that he suggested?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest that this is debate.