

An hon. Member: Full of oats?

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** In view of the large sale of wheat which the Australian wheat board has made to the People's Republic of China, may I ask the minister whether any negotiations were carried on by representatives of the Canadian government or the Wheat Board in an endeavour to get some of that order for Canada?

**Mr. Lang:** It was only a short time before that sale that the Wheat Board negotiators were in China and came back with a very large contract indeed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** In no way dealing with the negotiations which are presently going on, may I ask whether it is not a fact that the government of Canada was apprised in December of 1968 that the 135 million bushels which would remain untaken as of July 31, 1969, would be taken, and that in the month of April the Canadian government was apprised by Russia that so far as the 135 million bushels were concerned the Soviet Union intended to take that wheat, and there was never any question about it?

**Mr. Speaker:** The question as asked by the right hon. gentleman was clearly asked by way of argument, or at least in an argumentative manner. I hesitate to suggest that it might be asked in a different way, but perhaps that might make it easier for the Chair to accept the question.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, the last thing in the world I want to do is to ask a question that is not clear. I asked a very simple question: Did not the government of Canada know full well as far back as December of last year, and finally in the month of April, that there was only to be a postponement of the taking of the 135 million bushels and that Russia was going to do so?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The rephrased question is just as clearly argumentative as the first one. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I seldom rise on a point of order, but surely a question is not argumentative because it asks for information. What is argumentative about that?

### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

### WHEAT—AUSTRALIAN PRICES IN SALE TO CHINA

**Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of the Wheat Board. Previously I directed a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs when he was Acting Prime Minister in regard to the sale to China by Australia of some 80 million bushels of wheat at a price of approximately \$100 million. Now that the Minister without Portfolio is in the House, may I again ask whether this wheat deal was made at prices substantially below those prevailing under the International Grains Arrangement?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, we do not have official confirmation of the exact price of the reported sale of wheat by Australia to China. However, it might help the hon. member to know that contrary to what appears in some of the press reports the \$100 million figure referred to is Australian dollars rather than Canadian dollars. In other words, the price referred to in the press report would be \$120 million Canadian.

**Mr. Gleave:** A further supplementary question. There would be a difference in exchange, of course, as there is between the Canadian dollar and the United States dollar, but do the minister and his officials not concern themselves with whether or not the price levels under the International Grains Arrangement are being observed?

### PLANS TO INCREASE WHEAT AND FLOUR EXPORTS

**Mr. George Muir (Lisgar):** In view of the fact that Canadian exports of wheat and flour have dropped 43 per cent in the first two months of the crop year compared with the same two months of last year, what plans does the government have to increase our wheat and flour exports?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that actual shipments out of the country in the first two months of the year were quite low, largely because of the gap in deliveries to China. However, sales made during that period are running very well indeed. There has been in recent months a very rapid pick-up in deliveries of wheat from Canada, and this is beginning to be reflected in deliveries from country elevator points as well.