

Inquiries of the Ministry

member for Lapointe has appealed. Those in favour of sustaining the decision of the Chair will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: Those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it. I declare the ruling sustained on division.

TRADE

OATS AND BARLEY—STATEMENT ON EXPORT POSITION, ETC.

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asked me a question about oats and barley. First of all he referred to a statement which he alleged had been made by one of the commissioners of the wheat board to the effect that the situation as far as these two farm commodities are concerned is not favourable for export.

I inquired into the statement which the Leader of the Opposition alleged had been made in this regard, and I could find nothing to support the right hon. gentleman's assertion. The statement which was made by Mr. Robertson on this question was as follows:

In the case of oats and barley, it is unlikely producers will be able to market as much as they wish of these two grains but it is reasonable to expect delivery opportunities comparable to those of recent years.

I should like to go on to say something about the position of oats and barley, since this was the subject of the second part of the question asked by the right hon. gentleman. As all hon. members know, there was a magnificent harvest in western Canada this year, and the wheat board expects that between exports and domestic consumption the whole of the wheat crop will be disposed of within the present crop year. There has also been a very large crop of oats and barley. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, in recent years, indeed ever since we have been growing oats and barley, a high percentage of these grains has been marketed or consumed domestically and a relatively small quantity, particularly in the case of oats, has been exported. This will continue to be the situation in the present year.

I should like to add this, however, and I know the right hon. gentleman will welcome this news. There has been a substantial improvement in exports of oats and barley from Canada this year. In the case of oats, exports have been more than doubled, and

in the case of barley they are three times as high as they were a year ago.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Just give us the figures.

Mr. Sharp: Well, the figure last year, for the period up to November 20 was, in the case of oats, 1,900,000 bushels. This year it is 4,400,000. Last year for barley it was 2,900,000; this year it is 8,600,000. I think hon. members will agree that this represents a very substantial increase in exports. There has also been a substantial increase in shipments of oats and barley out of country elevators to eastern Canada and out of the lakehead. I make this point particularly because there have been a number of suggestions made in the house that the movement of oats and barley to eastern Canada has not been substantial.

Perhaps I might put these figures on the record, too. From the opening of this crop season, shipments of oats out of the lakehead have been 17.8 million bushels compared with 13.7 a year ago. In the case of barley, shipments amounted to 23.8 million bushels compared with 14.4 million a year ago. Notwithstanding this substantial and welcome improvement in the movement of oats and barley both domestically and for export, it is inevitable that, with such a large crop as the commissioner of the wheat board mentioned, delivery opportunities will be limited but will be at least comparable with those of recent years.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would not have risen on a question of privilege had it not been for the gratuitous insertion into the debate of unnecessary figures. Now I want to read what was said:

A Canadian wheat board commissioner says western farmers will not be able to sell much oats or barley this crop year, but growers would be able to sell "as much wheat as they wish to".

It was on the basis of that statement that I asked the question. The hon. gentleman has pointed out the amount of exports—

Mr. Sharp: That was the right hon. gentleman's question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: —so far as oats and barley are concerned. I did not interrupt while the hon. gentleman placed his information before the house, and I ask for the same courtesy. Mention was made of the fact that this year up until November 20 exports had been 8,600,000 bushels. I would point out that in 1962-63 the total exports of barley and barley products were 42,900,000 bushels while the previous year it was 15,400,000. So that every statement I made was in accordance with the facts.