

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS**OFFSHORE MINERAL RIGHTS—REPLIES FROM PROVINCES TO LETTERS FROM PRIME MINISTER**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister with respect to mineral rights in Canada's offshore areas. Has the Prime Minister received replies from any of the provinces to his letter of November 30, 1968, to which he referred in his statement to the House on December 2, 1968, and to his subsequent correspondence of February 27, 1969, with respect to Hudson Strait, Hudson Bay, James Bay, the Northwest Territories and the Arctic Islands, to which he referred in his statement to the House on March 4, 1969?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot from memory verify all those dates but I would confirm that substantial correspondence has been exchanged between the premiers of the provinces and myself on this matter. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been very actively pursuing with the provinces, the policy we laid down in the fall of 1968 and I believe certain meetings have already taken place between individual provinces and the minister or his officials toward a settlement along the lines we hope to achieve in our policy.

Mr. Dinsdale: Could the right hon. gentleman indicate whether on balance the attitude of the provinces has been positive or negative in reference to this matter?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have some doubts about this question.

GRAIN**WHEAT—REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF POLICY CONCERNING ACREAGE REDUCTION—EXPORT OF BARLEY**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister without Portfolio, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt. Because of the high degree of uncertainty that exists throughout western Canada as to the course to be followed by the government in connection with the suggested reduction in acreage which the minister has referred to and the admonition on his part that those farmers who have a large amount of wheat on hand should give consideration to not sowing any this year, will the minister say when he

[Mr. Chrétien.]

expects to be able to notify the House and the country as to the policy to be determined? Up to the present there have been these haphazard statements—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I think I did in effect refer to this question yesterday, indicating that we were giving the fullest possible attention to the matter and that, while I cannot set a date for making further statements on it, we are aware of the fact that we should try to do so as soon as possible. This is certainly our objective.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister's attention been brought to the fact that farmers in western Canada are anxious to get rid of their barley surplus? One case involves Dave Roberts of the Green Acres Fertilizer Company at Lethbridge who had found markets in the United States for four million bushels of Canadian barley. The right to export was forbidden and the sale was frowned on by the Wheat Board.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, there is no trick at all to finding markets for Canadian grain products below the prices at which they are offered by the Canadian Wheat Board in ways which would in fact hurt and destroy the whole price position. I am happy to remind the right hon. member that sales of wheat and sales of barley are substantially higher this year compared with the figures for the last two years. In fact, exports of barley will likely go to two and a half to three times the figure of last year.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that answer sounded like the result of a memory test. That was not what I asked. Why was this company refused the right to export? They could have sold four million bushels of barley at 78 cents a bushel.

Mr. Lang: I think the right hon. member himself at one time supported the policy of marketing grain outside Canada through the Canadian Wheat Board.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the right hon. member in a moment, but I would like to remind him and the minister that they seem to be engaging in a debate at the present time.