

price of crude should be allowed to approach the world level and to approach the U.S. level.

Senator Bosa: A supplementary question. The minister did not answer the first part of my question which related to the increase in interest rates and how that affects the cost of production.

● (1550)

Senator de Cotret: Honourable senators, I am a little bit at a loss. It seemed to me that the question was directed to our competitive position. As I mentioned earlier, the increase in interest rates in Canada has been less than has been the case with our major trading partners. That being so, we could not possibly be losing any competitive advantage. If anything, I would suggest that we are gaining competitive advantage by not increasing our interest rates as rapidly as are our major trading partners.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

LOSS OF SALE OF WHEAT TO RUSSIA

Senator Hays: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. A week or ten days ago, the Minister of Transport, the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, flew to Poland to finalize a sale of 4 million tons of wheat to that country. While he was in Poland, Russia quietly purchased 25 million tons of wheat from the United States.

Was the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce aware of Russia's need for 25 million tons of wheat, and if so, was it a pricing problem that prevented Canada from making that sale, or was it simply that we were not aware of Russia's requirement in this regard, as a result of which we failed to tap that market—a market which is traditionally ours.

Senator de Cotret: I am afraid I cannot give a specific answer to that question. I will be happy to look into it and provide an answer with the shortest possible delay.

YUKON TERRITORY

RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONER

Senator Lucier: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of Justice.

Instructions were given to the Yukon Commissioner, Ione Christensen, yesterday, which brought about her resignation. Unfortunately, she learned of those instructions from a Whitehorse reporter. Were those instructions discussed with the Yukon Legislative Assembly and with the native leaders of the Yukon, who represent 30 per cent of the population; and if not, why not?

Senator Flynn: I am afraid I am not familiar with the circumstances mentioned by the honourable senator. I shall look into it and try to provide a reply tomorrow.

[Senator de Cotret.]

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Senator Lucier: While he is looking into it perhaps the minister would obtain one or two other answers for me.

The minister's letter states that the principal objective is to move to full responsible government. The Prime Minister stated during the election campaign that a referendum will take place to determine what the residents of the Yukon want in terms of constitutional development. Would the minister please inform this chamber as to what the actual policy of the government is? Will the Yukon Territory have a choice in this matter, or will it be a matter that is decided in Ottawa?

The minister's letter goes on to state that he will convene a meeting between the Government of Canada, the Yukon Territorial Government and the Council for Yukon Indians. Why was such a meeting not convened before these announcements were made, and will a meeting now be convened, and when?

It seems a little bit late for the meeting to take place, since the action has been taken, but I would like to have answers to those questions.

Senator Flynn: This matter is not within the responsibility of my department. I shall obtain a reply for the honourable senator.

Senator van Roggen: Honourable senators, I wonder if I might put a supplementary question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Would he also include in the reply a statement as to whether the Commissioner was instructed, or whether instructions otherwise went forward, that the Leader of the Government in the Territorial Council should refer to himself as "Premier" in future.

Senator Flynn: I will.

Senator van Roggen: My question is a serious one.

Senator Flynn: I do not doubt it. However, I can sometimes smile without taking anything away from the seriousness of the matter.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ACCOMMODATION IN SENATE GALLERY

Senator Bosa: Honourable senators, I should like to address a question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I am wondering whether he, or any other representative of this chamber, regardless of party affiliation, was consulted before 10 seats were taken by the Prime Minister in the gallery in the other place which has traditionally been reserved for senators and their guests.

Senator Marshall: That is a question for the order paper.

Senator Flynn: I must say, honourable senators, I was not consulted. It was probably done in consultation with the Speaker of the other place. If the honourable senator wishes me to enquire, I shall try to bring in a report eventually.