

*Inquiries of the Ministry***PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER****APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN IN QUEBEC**

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): This is a question on a different subject. Bearing in mind the announcement today of the appointment of an ombudsman in the Province of Quebec—the third province to establish such an office—may I ask the Prime Minister whether any consideration is being given by the federal government to establishing such a post?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I know that consideration has been given to this matter in the Department of Justice, but I do not know whether it is under active consideration at the present time or not. However I will consult with the Minister of Justice and try to reply later.

GRAIN**WHEAT—REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO WESTERN FARMERS**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): My question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Mr. Speaker. In view of his announcement today, which means that western farmers will get about \$80 million less than last year for the same amount of wheat, and the serious situation in the western provinces by reason particularly of climatic conditions and failure to sell wheat, is the government now giving consideration to something in the nature of assistance to western farmers to meet a situation created in large measure by the schemozzle by the government?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I have already answered this question on a number of occasions. I repeat that at the moment we are concentrating on trying to return as fast as possible to the I.G.A. price schedule and to make as many sales of wheat as possible. This is why we have allowed the wheat board to become fully competitive, breaking the I.G.A. pricing schedule if necessary.

Yesterday, a lot of unnecessary gloom was spread by the opposition. One had the feeling, listening to them, that grain movement at Vancouver had stopped.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Nobody said that, except the Minister.

Mr. Pepin: I got the facts this morning. I declined to give them yesterday for the very good reason that I did not have them before me. The right hon. member for Prince Albert

[Mr. Fairweather.]

kept insisting that he had read my mail, which I did not like very much.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I cannot allow that. On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I know that the minister gets a daily report. That has been the course through the years. The only thing he doesn't do is read what he gets.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Order. Could not the minister simply answer the question?

Mr. Pepin: Gladly, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

It was mentioned yesterday that "there are no vessels in Vancouver" and that "none are expected before April 25". I should like to put the facts on record. There is no truth whatsoever in those statements. Four vessels were loading yesterday, three more are due in March—today is the 28th—and to date eight vessels have been nominated for arrival prior to April 25. The Chief Commissioner of the Wheat Board tells me that during the month of April 16 vessels are due to arrive and that he hopes others will be nominated in the coming days. So the situation is far from being as bad as was described yesterday by hon. members on the other side of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad the Minister has the information today which he had yesterday but did not read.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Diefenbaker: I was asking the Minister a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: I thought the hon. member was rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Pepin: I did not have the information yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

I find I am in the habit of pointing, like the right hon. member for Prince Albert.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You get the point, then.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pepin: Both Emily Post and my mother say that is a bad thing to do.

I did not have the information yesterday, and it is not the habit of the Wheat Board to