

Inquiries of the Ministry

WHEAT—STATEMENT AS TO FINAL PAYMENT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, may I add to an answer I gave yesterday when I was speaking about the Canadian Wheat Board. The hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. McLelland) asked me when the final payments would be made. I have checked with the wheat board, and it is expected that the issuance of final payment cheques for wheat will commence early in February, to be followed by the distribution of cheques on the oats and barley accounts. The level of final payments has not yet been determined.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

MEDICARE—INQUIRY AS TO FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the new Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the strong opposition of Premier Manning of Alberta to a universal, compulsory medicare plan, and in view of the fact that such a national plan needs the provinces' consent, has the government given consideration to calling another conference with the idea of dropping the compulsory side of that medicare plan?

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, there will be a conference of ministers of health at the end of this month and there has been a suggestion that the question of medicare be discussed at this conference, and that an indication be made by the provinces as to their intentions with respect to the federal proposals. There is no change in policy, with respect to the latter part of my hon. friend's question.

PENITENTIARIES

REPORTED PROTESTS RESPECTING NEW PRISON CONSTRUCTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat difficult, as I am certain you realize, to keep track of where responsibilities lie in the new cabinet reorganization. I should like to ask whatever minister is now in charge of penitentiaries the following urgent question. In view of the renewed and unanimous opposition of organizations in Canada interested in penology to the type of new prison construction, is it the government's intention to proceed with

the present construction and to call for tenders for new buildings on the old plans, to which so much unanimous objection has been raised?

Hon. L. T. Pennell (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to deal with the question, I am not clear as to what type of construction the hon. member is referring to; whether he is referring to a medium security, a maximum security, or a special detention unit. If he is referring to the special detention unit at Leclerc, this unit is being proceeded with. The other proposed units are being stayed until we see how the one at Leclerc works out in practice.

Mr. Winch: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the minister what attention has been paid to the unanimous objections with regard to this type of construction, which objections I understand he has received in the past few weeks and which were also made some eight or nine months ago. Is attention being paid to those objections, and is any new consideration being given to the type of construction?

Mr. Pennell: Mr. Speaker, certainly the department pays attention to representations made in these matters. However, I am not aware of any recent representations. I understand there is divided opinion as to the various types of construction.

TRANSPORT

BOX CARS—SUGGESTED ALLOCATION BY CONTROLLER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. Has the government made a decision with regard to the advisability of appointing a transport controller for box car allocation?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Minister of Transport): I understand, sir, there is no legal authority for the government to take such action.

EXCESSIVE USE OF CANADIAN BOX CARS BY U.S. RAILWAYS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. R. Southam (Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. In view of what appears to be a widespread and excessive use of Canadian railway box cars by United States railways at this time, what action is contemplated by the government to correct this situation which is working to the serious disadvantage of our Canadian grain trade?