

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have no information regarding the results of the explosion of the hydrogen bomb a few days ago. We know that there is to be another experimental explosion shortly. At the present time there is a qualified scientific official of the Canadian government in Washington where I have no doubt he will be given all the information available on the results of the recent explosion and plans for future ones.

PROTECTION FROM POSSIBLE DANGER OF
CONTAMINATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. H. Castleden (Yorkton): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence, of which I gave notice. It is in a way supplementary to the question asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. What steps are being taken to protect the Canadian people from possible dangers of contamination by radioactive materials which might reach Canada from the explosion of bombs in the Pacific?

Hon. R. O. Campney (Associate Minister of National Defence): I shall take this question as notice.

INQUIRY AS TO RADIOACTIVE DUST—MELFORT,
SASK.

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. A. Bryson (Humboldt-Melfort): I should like to ask the Minister of National Defence a question, of which I have given him notice. In his absence, I will direct it to the associate minister. Has the minister any statement to make following yesterday's press reports concerning the presence of radioactive dust in the Melfort area of Saskatchewan? Have representations been made to Washington regarding this matter?

Hon. R. O. Campney (Associate Minister of National Defence): I thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his questions, Mr. Speaker. In reply to the first question I have no statement to make beyond this, that I am advised by our scientists that it is not at all uncommon to find traces of radioactivity in rain, in dust and in snow from time to time at various places across Canada. None of these traces has been found to be of sufficient strength to be in any way harmful, and therefore they have been regarded as without any particular significance.

I am not aware of any more of the circumstances concerning radioactive indications at Melfort other than those which I have seen in the press.

[Mr. Knowles.]

With regard to the second question, as to whether representations have been made to Washington, I think that it is evident, from the circumstances as I have outlined them, that no such representations were considered necessary.

WHEAT

REQUEST FOR INTERIM PAYMENT ON DELIVERIES
OF 1953 CROP

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, with reference to the question asked yesterday by the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), may I say that the only letter that has been received from the government of Manitoba had to do with a question asked by Mr. Arthur Ross, M.L.A., with regard to supplementary payments on oats and barley. I was obliged to send the answer that I would have given in the house had a similar question been asked here, namely that government policy would be made known in due course.

DISPOSAL OF WESTERN WHEAT SURPLUS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. It is one of importance and significance to the western wheat farmers. In order to give farmers a lead as to the position they might take with reference to this year's crop operations, can the minister say what are the prospects for Canada's wheat surplus being disposed of during the present year and to what degree the wheat on the farms in the western provinces may be expected to be sold or disposed of in the elevators before this year's crop is harvested?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): My hon. friend was good enough to give me notice of his intention to ask this question and I have prepared the reply in some detail. In dealing with this question I should first of all like to refer to the delivery position so far in the crop year. From August 1, 1953, to March 17, 1954, producers' deliveries of grain in the prairie provinces amounted to 403 million bushels. If allowance is made for delivery since March 17, the actual delivery figure now stands at approximately 410 million bushels. At the present time the general quota is five bushels per specified acre. In addition, there have been substantial special authorizations