

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are obviously getting into a debate. However, the hon. member for Marquette may ask a supplementary and the Chair will then recognize the hon. member for Regina East.

Mr. Stewart (Marquette): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer, but I was referring to a program, other than the two-price system for wheat, which would cover all grains and provide for more active participation by the government than the minister has so far indicated?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member whether he thinks we should charge high prices and sell no grain?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Obviously, the hon. member for Marquette is initiating a debate. We ought to return to the original question. The hon. member for Regina East may ask a supplementary.

PURCHASE OF HOPPER CARS BY GOVERNMENT—
PREVENTION OF WITHDRAWAL OF ROLLING STOCK BY
RAILWAYS

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my supplementary question to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Can the minister indicate what assurances have been given by the railways that they will maintain their present quantity of rolling stock engaged in grain movement in that particular type of movement and whether the government or the Canadian Wheat Board will be maintaining control over that situation to make sure that the railways simply do not move some of their present rolling stock out of grain movement? Can he also indicate whether steps are being taken to overcome the traffic conditions encountered in winter months between the west coast and the Prairies, particularly in the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The second part of the hon. member's question clearly invites the minister to make a general statement on what steps are being taken to overcome transportation difficulties during the winter months. Clearly, that kind of information should be given on motions and not at this time.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, on the first part of the question, it would be very much the purpose and intention of the government to make sure that the hopper cars put into use in this fashion are additional to other rolling stock made available for the movement of grain. The railways have made clear their acceptance of the basic proposition that they have to supply rolling stock for any ordinary or predictable movement of grain. The key question was whether additional rolling stock was required in certain circumstances and whether the railways were obligated to supply it if the elevator companies were not willing to move to a seven-day week, and so on. It was to overcome that argument that we felt additional rolling stock should be put in place. I assure hon. members it will be very much our intention to make sure that this is additional rolling stocks and not a mere substitution for other rolling stock.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister. Am I to infer from the minister's answer that, to date at least, the railways have given no commitment that these hopper cars will be in addition to existing equipment and that the equipment now in use will be maintained? In other words, am I correct in assuming that so far no agreement has been reached with the railways?

Mr. Lang: No, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quite incorrect in thinking that. The railways have had very firm discussions with the Canadian Wheat Board on the amount of rolling stock they have available which is to be dedicated to grain. These 2,000 hopper cars will be additional to that rolling stock.

Mr. Paproski: A supplementary question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Bellechasse and return to this subject later.

* * *

• (1430)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

FEED GRAIN—SUPPLY FOR EASTERN FARMERS—
DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OTTAWA AND QUEBEC
RESPECTING PRICE PARITY

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture.

Considering that the feed grain problem is still with us, although slightly improved, may I ask the minister whether he will soon make a statement in this House concerning the new government policy with regard to feed grains in order that eastern farmers may get their supplies at prices comparable with those in western Canada?

[English]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I hope so, although I am unable to give a precise date now because the difference in price has very largely, if not completely, been corrected by the trade and by the supply-demand ratio in western Canada. Eastern feeders would like, however, to be assured that this wide discrepancy will not be repeated at some future time. We hope that before long we will be able to give some definitive reply to that question.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the honourable minister if at the departmental level talks are going on about this between the federal Department of Agriculture and the Quebec Department of Agriculture and whether his Quebec counterpart has made some representations?

[English]

Mr. Olson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but I do not think he has in the past few days. I would like to advise that discussions have taken place and are continuing on a much wider basis, including the trade and representatives of producer