

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that a Canadian minister of defence would have any influence on the decisions taken in Washington in relation to operations in Canada. We have had discussions and we have occasionally exchanged information on the possibility of restructuring here in Canada, but we have not tried to influence the decision of the United States.

Mr. McGrath: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware of the persistent rumours to the effect that the U.S. naval station at Argentia, Newfoundland, will be closing in June of next year? If so, will he ascertain as soon as possible from the United States authorities whether or not there is any truth in these rumours and make a statement to this effect?

Mr. Cadieux (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there is a planned reduction for the base at Argentia, but I am not aware that it is going to close.

GRAIN**WHEAT—PROVISION OF STORAGE FACILITIES**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for the Wheat Board. In view of the restoration of the sale to the U.S.S.R. and the estimate of prospective sales for the next year which has already been made, which means that a billion bushels of wheat will be on hand in Canada, will the government give consideration to providing storage facilities throughout western Canada through the use of bins, without advertising a particular company, of the type being used in the United States to the end that the congestion in the pipeline for wheat in the elevators and also on the farms will be removed?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, we certainly consider it a very important objective indeed to avoid having the pipeline congested, which would make the handling of grain in the proper fashion at the proper times difficult. The question of the supply of grain which it is desirable to have on hand and also the question in which place that supply ought to be stored are indeed receiving consideration at the present time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I thank the minister for his reply and also for conveying the idea that [Mr. Speaker.]

the government is now about to spend several tens of millions of dollars to provide storage for wheat to the end that the farmers will get the wheat off the farms and out of the elevators.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I did not hear any answer. Silence is golden.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In light of the answer the Minister without Portfolio gave a moment ago, do his department and the Wheat Board have under consideration a program to pay storage on farms and to help farmers store grain on the farms instead of clogging the elevators?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, a great number of ideas are under consideration in connection with this question.

WHEAT—APPROVAL OF BARTER DEAL WITH JAPAN

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): I have a related question for the Minister without Portfolio. Now that the Wheat Board has given approval to the Saskatchewan wheat barter deal with Japan, does the federal government approve of this action or does it intend to discourage such deals in the future?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): I should like to make it clear that the Wheat Board did not approve of this transaction but simply supplied grain on order when a purchaser was available for that grain. The position of the government remains the same with regard to these transactions. There are real trade difficulties connected with individual barter transactions which do not assure any additional sales of grain and which indeed have the problem attached to them that they may endanger price stability in the world.

Mr. Korchinski: In view of the interest expressed by three Russian delegates attached to a visiting trade mission in investigating the possibility of exchanging Russian electrical machinery for wheat, may I ask whether the government intends to investigate the prospect of operating an exchange system on a nationwide scale instead of confining it within one province?

Mr. Lang: I believe the facts of recent weeks speak for themselves: our trading rela-