

Inquiries of the Ministry

1,024,000,000 bushels, will the minister tell us whether the house can expect an early statement from him or from someone else—preferably from him—indicating concern and outlining immediate specific measures to be taken? Or does the minister agree with the Prime Minister that the sale of wheat is not really the responsibility of the government?

Mr. Lang: The Prime Minister's statement to which the Leader of the Opposition has referred is again quoted in half its form, which is a rather regrettable performance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lang: Since I am asked, however, I will say that what is left out is the continuation to the effect that the Wheat Board is there to look after sales. I would be very happy indeed to let the Leader of the Opposition have some copies of recent speeches of mine to indicate to him that—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, those speeches of the hon. gentleman will not be read as they are alibis, not policy. I would ask the hon. gentleman this: What is his view as a member for a Saskatchewan riding—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not blame hon. gentlemen opposite for saying "order". They know the difficulty in which the minister finds himself. I ask him: What is his attitude regarding, first, the question of some assistance such as acreage payments immediately to meet the serious situation in Saskatchewan? None of his speeches deals with that matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. gentleman has asked the minister for his view as a member from Saskatchewan, and the question as asked is not in order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Well, then, I will amplify it. Will he tell us, in the speeches he has delivered, what suggestions he has made. He has asked us to read these valuable additions to Liberal lore. What are the suggestions he has made in connection with benefits to the western farmer?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question is not acceptable as asked.

Mr. Stanfield: Will the minister make a statement to the house at an early date—not [Mr. Stanfield.]

somewhere outside in the country, but here in this house—as to what is intended?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lang: Of course, as soon as the consideration of this question is completed we shall certainly make a full statement on the issue to this house.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Since the problem referred to in these questions has existed in a grave form for several months, can the minister say whether a decision by the government is imminent?

Mr. Lang: Of course it is a certain part of the theory in the west that a great part of this problem has existed for much longer than that, indeed ever since Sir John A. Macdonald's "national policy". But we are fully aware of the seriousness of this issue.

AIR CANADA

POSSIBILITY OF MECHANICS STRIKE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister regarding the possibility that there will be a strike of the employees of Air Canada by midnight Sunday unless some agreement is reached with the corporation. Since the main dispute seems to have to do with the fact that Air Canada mechanics are paid wages considerably below those paid in the United States—indeed, if their requests are met they would still be below the United States figure—and in view of the fact—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):—that the President of the Treasury Board has stated—

Mr. Speaker: Order, I wonder whether the hon. member should not ask his question.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): My question is very short, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the President of the Treasury Board has indicated that where there is comparable productivity wage parity is reasonable, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the government still adheres to the principle laid down by the President of the Treasury Board, and is doing so in its negotiations with the employees of Air Canada.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Of course, Mr. Speaker, Air Canada has been