

Inquiries of the Ministry

have said before, study is being given to the Clark report, and when a decision has been reached the proper course will be followed.

TRADE**WHEAT—INQUIRY AS TO PURCHASES BY INDIA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Has the minister any report to make to the house following his conversations reported to have taken place yesterday with the Indian minister of food and agriculture, and more particularly as to whether India has suggested that it wishes to reduce its commercial purchases of wheat from 400,000 tons to 250,000 tons unless a loan can be arranged?

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce): The situation with regard to the sale of wheat by Canada to India is not thoroughly understood. India has not been a commercial market for Canada. That market commercially has been an Australian market. However, over the last three years we have made substantial gifts of wheat to India under the Colombo plan and by special gifts we made an arrangement with India for the purchase of wheat under a long term loan in the 1957-58 crop year and again in 1958-59. All told, in the crop year 1957-58 almost 24 million bushels were disposed of to India under this arrangement, and in 1958-59 just over 11 million bushels. So far as this year is concerned, there has been a gift to India of over 4 million bushels under the Colombo plan, and the purchase arrangement that was reported in the press holds good for this year.

We are looking forward to maintaining our position in the market in India, but it has not been one of our major markets for the sale of wheat. I discussed this matter with Mr. Patil, and he quite agreed that the position of Australia, their major supplier on a commercial basis and the position of Canada, a minor supplier on a commercial basis, should be maintained.

He also pointed out to me that India is a rice-eating country, and that if they had the funds available they would be purchasing rice instead of wheat. He further made the point that in the consumption of wheat in India, preference has been for the soft wheat which is the type produced in Australia and largely by the United States. The Indian family, instead of getting flour from a flour mill, purchases this wheat and grinds it

[Mr. Monteith (Perth).]

up at home. That is something that is not so easily done with the very hard Manitoba northern wheat which is the customary type we sell abroad. That is the situation with regard to Canada's assistance to India pertaining to wheat.

Mr. Argue: I should like to ask a supplementary question. Since the United States have now developed a market in India for roughly 150 million bushels a year for a four-year period and Canada's market, as the minister has said, one year recently was almost 24 million bushels, are any steps being taken to develop the market in India for non-commercial wheat, particularly some of Canada's lower grades?

Mr. Churchill: That matter is under serious consideration. We are anxious to assist India, one of our commonwealth partners, in these difficult years with regard to India's food supply. We are giving serious consideration to that aspect of it in the nature of gifts of wheat and flour not only to India but to Pakistan and Ceylon.

COMBINES INVESTIGATION ACT**CEMENT—ALLEGED COMBINES IN ONTARIO AND BRITISH COLUMBIA**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Justice, and I apologize for not having sent him notice.

I wonder if the minister's attention has been drawn to a newspaper article in this morning's *Globe and Mail* which indicates that the Toronto city council alleges that the Canada Cement Company Limited, the St. Mary's Cement Company Limited, the St. Lawrence Cement Company Limited and the Lake Ontario Portland Cement Company Limited have been engaged in a price fixing arrangement both this year and last year with respect to the price of cement, and also to the effect that a similar arrangement exists in Vancouver with respect to other firms. I should like to ask the minister whether this will be brought to the attention of the director of investigation and research in order that inquiries may be undertaken.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): I did not notice the article in the *Globe and Mail* today, but I am certain it will be brought to the attention of the director. If the Toronto city council feels the concern which is apparently indicated in the article, I am hopeful it will also get in touch with the director.