

Inquiries of the Ministry

months for acknowledgement are finally resorting to writing registered letters, in some cases two registered letters, to which no reply has been received?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must take objection to the hon. member's raspish question, because I think it is argumentative. Perhaps the hon. member might rephrase it. He is putting it in an argumentative way and perhaps he might put it directly.

Mr. Korchinski: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister why the commission is not replying to these inquiries from producers, some of whom are making re-applications? Is there any reason for this?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that there was undue time delay in making replies. However I shall look into this at once.

An hon. Member: Please do.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. Will he undertake to review the present policy of the dairy commission as that policy applies to cream producers in Saskatchewan and other parts of western Canada?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, the policy was under review before announcements were made for the 1969-70 dairy year. If however the hon. member is asking us to set up regional policies within the framework of the national policy to cover our differences, then I think we should have to consider very carefully the implications that might flow from that kind of policy.

Mr. Gleave: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister aware of the extreme hardship the present policy is working on the small dairy producer on the prairies in particular, and in other areas as well?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, the dairy policy applied to the prairie regions is not different from the policy applied to other regions of Canada.

Mr. Korchinski: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the people of some of these areas are importing butter not only from other parts of Canada but also from outside Canada, and since our producers are at the same time being eliminated, will not the minister review present policy with a view to arriving at some regional policy which may help in this situation?

[Mr. Korchinski.]

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, we have considered representations made on a number of occasions by those seeking the setting up of regional policies, or different regional policies. But when one considers the ramifications and implications inherent in such policy, in my view it becomes apparent that such a policy is undesirable.

TRADE**WHEAT—DELIVERY UNDER U.S.S.R. AGREEMENT**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fear and frustration among western farmers who have large quantities of wheat on their farms unsold, and in view of reports that the U.S.S.R. does not intend to complete the taking of the balance of the wheat it has undertaken to take, is the minister now in a position to advise the house on this matter? A few days ago he was asked about it and said he would look into it. Can he now let the farmers know whether the millions and millions of bushels still to be taken by the U.S.S.R. will not be accepted by them?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, to be absolutely frank, I do not think I can answer that question by either yes or no. The information I have now does not permit me to conclude either that they will not or that they will take the wheat.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister is in that state of uncertainty, does he still consider himself optimistically inclined in this regard?

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question about the 135 million bushels of wheat which the Soviet Union is still committed to take under the three year agreement. That sale could mean some \$270 million to Canadian wheat producers. Are negotiations going on with respect to this balance of wheat to be delivered to the Soviet Union, and when does the minister expect to have some definitive reply from the government of the Soviet Union?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I think I can say that negotiations are going on, but I have no indication of the time at which I can expect an answer.