

Inquiries of the Ministry

variety of reasons for keeping this kind of information confidential. However, I can repeat the statement I made that the prospects are now very good for exports at those levels.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Can the minister inform the House when the resignation of Mr. McNamara will take effect and who his successor will be?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

BARLEY—AMOUNT OF FINAL PAYMENT
TO FARMERS

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): My question is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville concerning projected sales. Bearing in mind projected sales and sales already confirmed, particularly with regard to feed grain and barley, may I ask whether the minister is in a position to tell us the estimated amount farmers might expect to receive as the final payment for barley? Absence of this information leaves western Canada and the agricultural industry in a great deal of confusion, now knowing what to expect as the final payment on barley. Since he is aware of committed barley sales as far ahead as July, the minister is in a better position to supply this information.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): It is not normal to make a forecast very much ahead of the closing of a pool but I will be glad to investigate whether it might be possible to pick a date for giving some advance information this year.

WHEAT—PRICES OF RECENT SALES

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): I preface my question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration with my congratulations on his having been raised to the elevated position of a full minister. I do this most sincerely.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Watch out!

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is nothing so sad as those who have developed a capacity for being suspicious. Without endeavouring to secure the exact prices in connection with the wheat sales that have been taking place

[Mr. Lang.]

recently, I would ask the minister whether he is in a position to say that the prices were within the International Grains Arrangement or its successor, even though that agreement was not generally signed, or are these sales being made at fire-sale prices?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I believe the right hon. gentleman posed in his question two alternatives, neither of which, in fact, reflects the situation. Wheat Board prices are fairly well known and are evident to the public. Prices have been rising steadily but remain below the minimum levels set under the International Grains Arrangement.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The question I particularly asked was: Are these prices at which the wheat is being sold at a fire-sale level, similar to those which were in effect in 1938 when the plug was pulled and the price was anything at all as long as the wheat could be gotten rid of?

Mr. Lang: As I have indicated, the prices are known. Prices have been rising. They have been ranging between \$1.71 and \$1.77 based on No. 1 northern. These are prices which are competitive in the world. I would have thought the right hon. gentleman and hon. members generally would approve of selling wheat at competitive prices and getting into this market.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question to the minister. I recognize there is certain information which the minister cannot give to the House but surely he can tell us what firm commitments there are for the sale of wheat to date in this crop year. Can the minister give us this information today, or undertake to get it and supply it to the House at a later date?

Mr. Lang: It is the global total which I would certainly hesitate to give. Within that global total there are important sales, many of which are made without an identifiable destination at this stage due to the nature of the international wheat business, so this information would not be very helpful, and since I am not prepared to give the global figure there is really no additional information I can make available.