

Finance in the necessary absence of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. It deals with the wheat agreement with the Soviet union, announced by the minister earlier this afternoon on motions. I should like to ask whether the terms of the agreement provide any protection for wheat farmers against increases in the cost of transportation which may take place as a result of certain settlements which have been made with the seaway workers and dock workers, and which may have to be made with railroad employees.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): I would prefer to answer this question after I have had an opportunity of talking to the chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board. I will say this, however. The only pricing which has taken place has been in respect to deliveries in the coming crop year. Prices for subsequent years are subject to negotiation.

Mr. Lambert: But the minister, as a senior member of the government, is aware of the trade agreement. Can he tell us whether there is any clause which will protect Canadian farmers against an escalation of transportation charges?

Mr. Sharp: My reluctance to answer this question stems from the fact that this is a highly technical matter. I would simply say that the price of Canadian wheat sold to the Soviet union is determined by the Canadian Wheat Board in the interests of the western farmer, and not by the government.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Albert): In view of the possibility of continuing difficulties on the St. Lawrence seaway, will the minister give his personal assurance and that of the government that the dependable Atlantic ports of Saint John and Halifax will be given a good share of this wheat and flour business, in the summer as well as the winter?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that in the contract between the Canadian Wheat Board and the U.S.S.R. provision is made for shipment of wheat through all ports of Canada, including Churchill.

[Later:]

Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the announcement he made about the sale of wheat to Russia, since Russia is a country that uses a lot of edible fats and oils would

the minister not bring to the attention of the trade commission that Canada could provide them with edible oil from the rapeseed area of Canada?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to say that in response to the representations not only of my hon. friend but of many others throughout this broad country, the great productive capabilities of Canada in rapeseed have been brought to the attention of the whole world including the Soviet union.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance arising out of the statement he made earlier today, and ask him whether the amount of flour is specified in the contract and, if so, how much in each of the three years.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position before the return of the Canadian Wheat Board to ascertain the exact answer to this question, but I can assure the house that provision is made for a very substantial quantity of flour in each of the three years.

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent (Ont.)) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance based on his statement in regard to the new sales of grain to Russia, and that the matter of trade between our two nations will be reviewed from time to time. Can the minister state whether any definite commitment was asked for or given in regard to an increase of Russian exports to Canada and, if so, to what extent?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, in the statement I made on motions today I quoted the exact terms of the communiqué agreed upon between the government of Canada and the U.S.S.R. through the Canadian minister and the Soviet minister. I suggest that this question be reserved until the return of the Minister of Trade and Commerce from Moscow.

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

SUGGESTED STUDY BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister of which I gave him notice. In the light of recent electoral developments in Quebec, and the strong views on the need