

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 19, 1964

The house met at 11 a.m.

TRADE

WHEAT—POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN SALES TO RUSSIA

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister in the absence of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. It arises out of some questions I asked the other day relative to a suggestion in the press that the U.S.S.R. would not be buying much more Canadian wheat. I would ask the right hon. gentleman whether his attention has been directed to a statement made yesterday by Mr. Khrushchev in Odense, Denmark, as follows:

It is unlikely Moscow will make further purchases of grain from the west which has provided millions of bushels of wheat to offset poor Russian crops of 1963.

This is a matter that is very important to the economy of Canada. Is the Prime Minister in a position to say what discussions have taken place in this connection, and whether there is sound reason to fear that the U.S.S.R. will be greatly reducing, if not entirely ending, the contracts for the purchase of wheat?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is of course a very important question; it is a question of long range significance. I will have to wait until the return of the Minister of Trade and Commerce today, and perhaps he will be in a position to make a statement on the whole matter early next week.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the Prime Minister, in view of the uncertainty of continuing wheat sales to the U.S.S.R., if the government would expedite its policy of foreign aid in order to take up some of the slack in wheat exports later this year.

Mr. Pearson: I will be very glad to look into that situation, Mr. Speaker. I was not quite sure that I heard the hon. member's question correctly, but I think it was that we should

expedite and increase foreign aid. Certain steps have already been taken in this connection, and if the situation requires it and makes it possible, more steps could be taken.

Mr. Olson: The government have announced that they intend to step up foreign aid, particularly in food exports, to something like \$40 million a year. I am asking the government now if they will take some action to implement this stated policy of theirs to take up some of the slack.

Mr. Pearson: I said I would be very glad to look into that suggestion, Mr. Speaker.

FINANCE

FAMILY ALLOWANCES—CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION EXTENDING APPLICATION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Finance and ask whether he could not persuade the government to allow him to bring in at once legislation that will extend family allowances to students of 16 and 17 years of age while attending school, so they might make preparations for the next school term.

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the government to bring in legislation along those lines at the very earliest date, and I hope it will be in early July.

Mr. Starr: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could not the minister try to persuade the government to break into the flag debate in order to bring forward this very important legislation?

Mr. Gordon: Mr. Speaker, I think the government is—

An hon. Member: In trouble.

Mr. Gordon: —in an excellent position to decide on the order in which the business should be presented to the house.

Mr. Starr: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does not the minister consider that this legislation would be far more