

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of a Canadian Press report that an announcement is imminent, have other countries been consulted about the reduction of their acreage also, and what has been their reaction?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the subjects I discussed in Washington. I think exporting nations with surpluses have realized for some time that this problem must be taken in hand. I am sure that international co-operation is going to be important in this area.

ACTION TO IMPLEMENT DONATION OF WHEAT BY FARMERS TO FEED MÉTIS

Mr. Korchinski: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Has the minister consulted with the three prairie premiers or his counterparts in the three prairie provinces on the question of granting assistance to people who need it even though the effect of the policies of some of the prairie governments is that all able-bodied people will not be given assistance?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker. I have not had conversations with three prairie ministers on this point.

WHEAT—REPORTED POSSIBLE SALE TO ROUMANIA

Mr. A. B. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. Has the Wheat Board investigated the report of a possible sale of 200 million bushels of wheat to Roumania. If so, what was the result?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): I have noted the press statements today concerning the proposal to sell Canadian wheat to Roumania for resale to other countries at prices significantly below present market prices. The interest by Roumania in the purchase of Canadian wheat has been investigated fully by the trade commissioner and during a recent visit of two commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board to eastern Europe. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I am dismayed at some of the comments in the press that support a proposal that would lower the price of wheat by up to 50 cents a bushel without in any way increasing sales. I fully support the Canadian Wheat Board's

21701—504

rejection of such a proposal and I am confident that those supporting orderly marketing will share my views. As the minister responsible to Parliament for the operation of the Canadian Wheat Board, I am particularly annoyed at the suggestion that they are sitting in their offices rather than actively pursuing sales opportunities.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think, if the minister wishes to make a statement, that it should be made on motions.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister, to which the answer I am sure can be very brief. In order to counteract the growing feeling of frustration and alienation in western Canada, will the minister ensure that the statement he makes includes a measure of substantial aid in a wide variety of fields for the depressed agricultural industry of the west?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated before, all aspects of the problem are being taken into consideration and I will certainly hope to include the entire problems of the agricultural industry in any statements which we propose to make.

WHEAT—RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOXCAR DISTRIBUTION—APPOINTMENT OF CONTROLLER

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister without Portfolio in charge of the Wheat Board. Since the minister has indicated that the allocation of boxcars to certain delivery points is the responsibility of the elevator companies and, in one particular case, the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, will the minister tell the House who has the authority with respect to the distribution of boxcars at the present time? Is it the minister's department, the Canadian Wheat Board, the railways, the elevator companies or other bodies? At the same time will the minister indicate whether he is now prepared to appoint an over-all transport controller in order to alleviate this hodge-podge of confusion?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, the allocation of boxcars under the block system operates on a co-operative basis. A person on the staff of the Wheat Board is in charge of the directing. When cars are allocated to a particular block or to particular elevator company blocks it is

1970 FEB 26