

Inquiries of the Ministry

the trade pact did he also look into the question of the prices charged by the automobile manufacturers to Canadian purchasers of automobiles? Is he really satisfied that his so-called narrowing of the gap has met with the spirit of the pact which aimed at parity of prices?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When asking the second supplementary, the hon. member was asking for an expression of opinion. I doubt whether that would be in order. The minister may wish to answer the first question.

Mr. Pepin: I was so interested in the second question, I lost track of the first one.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. While the hon. member reflects on the supplementary perhaps we might give an opportunity to other members to raise other subjects which I am sure are important.

Mr. Lewis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When answering the question the minister spoke a great deal about the spirit of the pact being more important than the letter, and indicated a number of ways in which he thought the pact had worked out advantageously. With great respect it seems to me it is not out of order to ask him, in the words he used, whether the soaking of the Canadian purchaser is within the spirit of the pact.

Mr. Speaker: What I am suggesting to the hon. member at the moment is that we have had a sufficient number of supplementaries and I think we might go on to another subject.

[Translation]

TRADE

WHEAT—INQUIRY AS TO SALE OF SURPLUS

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Does the minister foresee any new possibilities of selling the surplus of wheat that we have at the moment in western Canada?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): No, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

ADHERENCE BY AUSTRALIA TO INTERNATIONAL GRAINS ARRANGEMENT

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the

Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of recent reports that the Australian government is not willing to divulge the price at which recent sales of wheat were made to China, can the minister assure the house that this information is available to the signatories of the International Grains Arrangement within the International Grains Council, and can he inform the house whether any real progress is being made toward stabilizing prices under the International Grains Arrangement?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I could not give an absolute answer to this but I understand that the lines of communication between exporters, and in particular between Canada and Australia, are extremely good.

Mr. Gleave: As a supplementary question could the minister give the house an indication of whether or not it is the government's intention to establish a firm support price for farmers at the minimum levels of the International Grains Arrangement? Is this under consideration? Our farm people would very much like to know.

Mr. Pepin: I have already said that all these suggestions made on all sides of the house, and by different associations representative of farmers, are being studied by the government, and any new policy will be announced in due course.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Has the minister made any real attempt to determine whether or not Australia intends to recognize the International Grains Arrangement for the next crop year or for any date in the future?

Mr. Pepin: Because I spoke with the minister of trade for Australia I know that Australia has the same difficulty we have in respect of marketing wheat. I know the Australian government has decided to take responsibility for marketing only 357 million bushels out of a possible 500 million bushels and more. The farmers of Australia apparently will have to adapt to the circumstances. I was given assurances that Australia was and will be living up to the I.G.A.