

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pepin: I do not have the precise number but I will try to get it, if possible, for the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Did the minister not receive that information yesterday?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Regina East on a supplementary.

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): In view of reports from the terminals in Vancouver that no ships are coming in, and since there are some 4,000 box cars on their way to Vancouver, have steps been taken to redirect the flow of grain traffic to those places where it is needed?

Mr. Pepin: Such as where?

Mr. Burton: The Lakehead.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Assiniboia.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that empty ships have been leaving Vancouver, what steps has the department taken in order to keep shippers informed as to the progress being made in filling the terminal facilities so that the ships will return?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge—and I think I am well informed on this subject—only two ships left unloaded at the time of the tie-up and they were supposed to come back later. I have information from the Wheat Board that they and the grain trade are making all necessary efforts to bring the ships back to Vancouver to be filled with grain for delivery to western clients.

Mr. Korchinski: A further supplementary question. Is it a fact that grain dryers will not be operating at the Vancouver terminals because of congestion?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member cannot ask the minister to confirm or deny a matter. He is making an allegation.

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce whether he has ordered an investigation into allegations made in the past two months that line elevator companies and one of the pool elevators have been ignoring Canadian Wheat Board orders with impunity?

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): As I am in the habit of saying to the right hon. member for Prince Albert, that is a debatable point.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Now that the minister has had an opportunity of reading the memorandum, will he give the information asked for?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee there is no information here about the number of ships expected.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schreyer: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not know whether the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce was replying to my question or to the question of the right hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Pepin: Both, in succession.

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): A supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Is the minister going on record officially as blaming the opposition for the inefficiency and bungling that has surrounded the handling of the wheat crop?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I wonder whether hon. members feel we should go on to another subject now?

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question regarding the whole problem of moving wheat and I direct it to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In light of the negative statement made by the Prime Minister yesterday afternoon to the Agricultural Congress relative to the sale of Canadian wheat, will the minister and his department take a far more positive approach to the whole question of surplus wheat?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek. I suggest to hon. members that we pass on to another subject after this supplementary.

Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. I should like to ask whether he or the government are making provision, in view of what happened in Vancouver regarding ships and surplus grain, to ensure that the same situation does not develop at the Lakehead where the elevators are now half empty?

Mr. Pepin: I will do my best, Mr. Speaker, but that is not the case now.

Mr. Horner: Your best is not good enough.