

Inquiries of the Ministry

distribution office may make copies available to members, and will he do so this afternoon?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have no objection whatsoever to tabling this report, though I should say that this is not the kind of report that is customarily tabled. However, I see no reason why the request should not be granted, and I will look into the matter.

Mr. Starr: This is the normal practice. Could this be done this afternoon?

Mr. Pearson: I will look into this matter right away.

TRADE**WHEAT—SITUATION RESULTING FROM LACK OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact that tomorrow is a short sitting day, though if there is unanimous consent perhaps we could sit tomorrow evening to discuss this matter of widespread interest regarding the price and marketing of wheat and its effect on farm income, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will consider calling the estimates of the Department of Trade and Commerce this afternoon. I understand that we are to consider the estimates of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but perhaps it would be possible to substitute the other estimates in order that members would then have at least the major part of a day during which to debate what appears to most to be a very important matter.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it has already been indicated that two pieces of legislation are to come before the house this afternoon. I see no reason why we should not proceed with those bills and consider the estimates of the Department of Trade and Commerce tomorrow. If at the conclusion of the debate on those estimates tomorrow at six o'clock the discussion has not been completed, and the house leaders agree this afternoon to sit tomorrow evening, perhaps this would afford a further opportunity.

Mr. Douglas: I should like to ask a supplementary question. Perhaps I should direct this related question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Are discussions going on with the secretary of agriculture of the United

[Mr. Starr.]

States regarding the maintenance of a differential between Canadian and United States wheat prices similar to that which obtained under the previous agreement, which it was felt would be obtained under the new agreement?

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I think hon. members know I visited Secretary Orville Freeman in Washington. At that time I spoke to him and his officials about the minimum price that was agreed upon at Geneva. As a result of that meeting I think a stronger trend has returned to world markets. The price of wheat has gone up some 2½ cents since that time. We are endeavouring to implement measures to maintain that trend in the price, and I will have more to say about this tomorrow.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question which I think may help to clarify this matter. On June 5, 1967 as reported at page 1134 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Trade and Commerce left the impression that the old world wheat agreement was still in operation and would continue until July 31, 1968. I should like to ask whether there is an international wheat agreement in operation now and will there be any such agreement governing, controlling and stabilizing the price next year?

Mr. Winters: No, Mr. Speaker; and I think the record is clear in this regard.

The price provisions of the international wheat agreement have lapsed. When I was discussing the Kennedy round earlier this year I made it clear that there would be no agreement covering wheat until the new agreement is ratified next year. In the statement I made at that time I did deal with what I anticipated would be the price of wheat in the meantime. But I made it very clear that world conditions of supply and demand would govern, as indeed they do for most commodities.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, in view of the ministers' reply I rise on a question of privilege. The minister was asked this question on June 5, 1967, by the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. Rapp).

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question and should be answered right now, for the simple reason that the farmers in the west have planted their wheat and are waiting to know where they stand in light of the new wheat agreement.