

Inquiries of the Ministry

correct, and why it was not possible to take advantage of this very large offer to purchase Canadian wheat.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm, of course, that the wheat board did enter into a contract for half a million tons for the second half of the present crop year. The Chinese mainland authorities were interested in obtaining more at the present time. The wheat board, having in mind its commitments to its other customers, decided that it could not safely enter into a larger contract with mainland China at the present time.

Mr. Douglas: A supplementary question. Is this due to the lack of supply or the inability to handle wheat at the port facilities?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I have explained on other occasions there is no lack of wheat in Canada today. The limitations lie in transportation, the capacity of terminal elevators, and so on.

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON MEETING WITH
PROVINCIAL MINISTERS

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, since all members are interested in trade matters, could the Minister of Trade and Commerce inform the house of the result of his meeting yesterday with the ministers of industry and trade from the different provinces?

[Text]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Trade and Commerce): We had a very satisfactory meeting of ministers from eight of the provinces who gathered in Ottawa yesterday. The other two provinces whose ministers were unable to be present were represented by their deputy ministers. These were the ministers concerned with trade and industry, and yesterday we discussed the question of trade promotion. The purpose of this meeting was to co-ordinate trade promotion activities of the federal and provincial governments.

I think our discussions were most useful. We decided there was need for more co-ordination than in the past. This was agreed on the part of both the federal and the provincial governments. We laid plans to accomplish this co-ordination both at home and abroad. As far as the federal government are concerned, we offered the utmost co-operation to the provinces. We made it clear to them that we had no quarrel whatever with their activities in the field of export trade promotion. We believe that the more people who are promoting our external trade today, the

better it will be for the country. In that spirit we offered to help train their people. We offered the utmost co-operation.

If I may say so, I think this was an example of co-operative federalism in action.

[Translation]

Mr. Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question? Could the Minister of Trade and Commerce tell us, in view of his great success in the sale of farm products from western Canada—wheat, in particular—whether he intends to try just as hard to sell products of the eastern farmers, namely dairy products and by-products such as butter, cheese, etc. since there is a surplus at the present time?

[Text]

Mr. Sharp: I can assure the hon. gentleman that in so far as external markets are concerned, the Department of Trade and Commerce does not discriminate amongst areas of the country. We give equal concern and equal attention to the products of all parts, including dairy products the exports of which my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and I are both promoting very actively.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington South): May I ask the minister if either the depressed areas or designated areas were discussed at this conference?

Mr. Sharp: I understand that is being discussed today with these ministers when they meet my colleague the Minister of Industry.

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): May I ask the minister if he discussed with the ministers from the provinces the question of smaller loans by export credits insurance for export credit?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the federal officials who were present gave an account of our policies in this respect, but I do not remember there being any complaint from the provinces about the inadequacy of our services.

PUBLIC SERVICE

REQUEST FOR REPORT OF CIVIL SERVICE
COMMISSION ON BILINGUALISM

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Grégoire (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State.

In view of the fact that last August 1, the minister promised to table a report on bilingualism within the civil service, that requests to that effect were made last October 1 and