

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

## WHEAT—CONFERENCE OF WESTERN EXPORTING COUNTRIES

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Can the minister say whether the United States secretary of agriculture, Ezra Benson, is arranging in Washington within the next few weeks a conference of the major non-communist wheat exporting countries in order to discuss a joint export program and co-operation in the export field?

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, there have been some items in the press forecasting arrangements of this order. I expect to receive official word with regard to this soon. This is in line with the proposals frequently put forward here by the Prime Minister himself with regard to a world food bank and suggestions of that nature, and the general disposal of surplus food products.

**Mr. Argue:** Do I take it from the minister's answer that Canada would welcome the opportunity of participating in such an important conference?

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared to participate in any conference of this nature that would be of assistance to countries that are in need of food.

## ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

## NEWFOUNDLAND—INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillington):** I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that with only two judges in the supreme court of Newfoundland it is virtually impossible for the court to function as a court of appeal, and justice is thereby being denied to the people of Newfoundland, could the Prime Minister indicate whether it will be possible for him to recommend without further delay the appointment to fill the vacancy on the court which has existed for three months, and which on February 12 he expressed the hope of making at the earliest possible date?

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** It is generally agreed that an effective court of appeal requires three members, so that when an appeal comes before the court, if there is any division of opinion the appeal will not be dismissed on an equal division of the court.

In the province of Newfoundland over the years the number of supreme court judges has been limited to three. The result has been

Trade and Commerce. In view of the concern caused by the announcement by the dominion bureau of statistics as reported in this morning's *Montreal Gazette* that in the first half of the current crop year wheat exports from Canada were 4.5 per cent lower than last year, and that for the same period the combined exports from Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Argentina increased by 3.2 per cent, United States exports alone having increased in the same period by 11.2 per cent, has the minister any statement to make on future export prospects for Canadian wheat?

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** I should like to thank the hon. member for having given me notice of his intention to ask this question. There is no need for any alarm with regard to the wheat situation. Although our exports for the first six months are down by 4.3 per cent, that is by between six and seven million bushels, nevertheless the prospect for this year is that we shall reach an export total of 300 million bushels of wheat. Last year we set a record total of 316 million bushels. Even with the slight decline I have mentioned, our export total should amount to 300 million bushels.

We are in a world situation where exportable surpluses are greater than they were a year ago. At the same time it is expected that world trade in wheat will be higher than it was a year ago, which offsets to some extent the exportable surplus which is being held largely by the United States, Australia and Russia. However, Canada's position in the commercial markets of the world is still as good as it was a year ago. Some of the extra exports from the United States are very likely due to that country's surplus disposal program. In general, Canada's export position with regard to wheat is holding up very well and we shall experience another record year.

**Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia):** A supplementary question. Taking into account Canada's current export of wheat, can the minister say whether it is a fact that at the present time Canada's net surplus of wheat is less than at the same date a year ago; also is there likely to be a reduction in the carry over at July 31, 1959?

**Mr. Churchill:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. In the crop year 1957-58 the surplus, which was set at over 700 million bushels in July, 1957 was reduced by over 100 million bushels, and the same amount of reduction is to take place in this crop year, 1958-59. Another 100 million bushels of that surplus will go into the world market for disposal.