

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I think in any economy like ours it must be expected that in some years the growth in exports will be higher than in other years, depending upon what is taking place in the country. I understand that when you have industrial development imports are bound to increase. Such growth in imports is not necessarily bad. I have nevertheless issued a paper in which I have invited exporters to become even more aggressive than they were when the hon. member was Minister of Trade and Commerce. It may not have been possible at that time, but it may be now as we have improved our facilities with the Export Development Corporation coming into effect in September. For the time being, the E.C.I.C. is more active than before because—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I apologize to the minister for interrupting him. I appreciate that the hon. member has a supplementary question. I expected he would have one. I had some doubts about the question in the first instance. Had I suggested it be placed on the order paper we might now have an easier situation. Hon. members know that the Chair always hesitates to allow questions which ask for general statements by ministers and to which ministers respond in a proper fashion by making lengthy statements. This places the Chair in a different position because the Chair must interrupt the minister who is in effect only answering the question which has been allowed. I would think that normally this type of question should be placed on the order paper. However, in view of the fact, as has been pointed out by another hon. member, we are not going to be here for an eternity, perhaps the hon. member should be allowed to ask the supplementary.

**Mr. Hees:** Mr. Speaker, having great respect for your rulings and the way you control the house I shall desist from asking my usual supplementary question.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wonder whether the hon. member might not want to change his mind later. If he does I shall accept it.

**Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I had intended to ask the minister a similar question. Is the serious reduction of over \$300 million in six months in great part the result of reduced wheat sales and, if so, to what extent?

**Mr. Pepin:** Mr. Speaker, I will find out the extent of its effect. It certainly has had a

[Mr. Hees.]

part, but there are other factors involved. For example last year there were strikes in the United States and other circumstances which helped to increase our exports. I would think that the decline in the sales of wheat has not been so important this year compared with last year—exports of wheat was 310 million bushels this year as opposed to 325 million last year. It was in comparison with the previous year that the big decline took place.

**EXTERNAL AID****DEVELOPING NATIONS—INQUIRY AS TO INCREASE IN ASSISTANCE**

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, my question arises from a report in today's newspapers emanating from the O.E.C.D. which suggests that Canada is the lowest among members in respect of assistance in external aid in relation to gross national product. I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the government is preparing plans to increase Canada's assistance to developing nations this year?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of this report and have been for some time. I gather it has now been published. I share with the government the hon. member's desire to increase the volume of our aid. One of the rather unusual factors that arose last year was the replenishment of I.D.A. The International Development Association was allotted certain amounts which we would ordinarily have contributed last year. Our expenditures in the first six months this year in respect of development assistance as officially defined are \$149 million compared with \$76 million last year. This indicates that not only are we increasing our aid but that there were some very special factors operating last year.

**Mr. Lewis:** I should like to ask the minister, in view of the fact that during the last number of years the amounts actually spent by Canada in aid to developing nations were sometimes as much as one-third below the amounts voted by parliament, whether he and the government will consider picking up the lag in these amounts, particularly through the provision of wheat and flour to needy countries throughout the world in view of our wheat surplus?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, it is the purpose of the government to try to overcome this lag.