

Inquiries of the Ministry

obtained as a result of his presence for so long in that very productive area in which he travelled?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, this trip once again gave me the occasion to witness how extensive was the sales promotion system of the Canadian Wheat Board. I met the wheat board people in Bangkok doing research into the wheat requirements in the area. I had the occasion of witnessing how good was their sales promotion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I do not think—

Mr. Speaker: Is the right hon. gentleman rising on a supplementary?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not think the hon. gentleman understood my question. As a result of this visitation and his meetings with the Wheat Board representatives, is the minister in a position to say whether any country in Asia is going to increase the amount of wheat that it purchased last year. Have new purchasers been secured or potential markets obtained?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I am not in the habit of claiming credit for selling wheat, as was a previous government. I can tell the house that I did have useful discussions on the I.G.A. with Australian ministers and with the Australian wheat board. While I was in Singapore a sale of wheat was made by the Wheat Board. However, as I was on the spot I did not find it possible to board a plane back to Singapore to sign the contract.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must bring to the attention of hon. members that perhaps we should pass on to another subject and resume tomorrow the debate on this particular topic. I had already started to recognize the hon. member for Swift-Current-Maple Creek.

WHEAT—REASONS FOR LOSS OF MARKETS

Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the minister, following all his discussions in regard to the wheat situation, can inform the house, and particularly the farmers of Canada, why Canada lost 33 per cent of her markets last year?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member that this question is not the type that can be asked.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

BEEF—REASON FOR STATEMENT ABOUT NEW ZEALAND EXPORTS TO CANADA

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Is the minister going to make a report to the house on the results of his long trip to Asia and the Antipodes? Secondly, would he explain why and on what basis he told the New Zealanders that they would have a greatly expanding market for beef in this country?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. While the first question might be in order, the hon. member knows he cannot ask the minister to comment on statements that even he has made outside the house. I believe the first question was whether a statement should be made, and perhaps this might be answered.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, being a very humble person, I would not want to take the time of the house to make such a statement today, but I think I did make a good speech in Vancouver the other day, of which I will send the hon. member a copy. On the subject of beef, which is an important subject—

An hon. Member: The question was ruled out.

Mr. Pepin: Was it? O.K. Then—

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member rising on a supplementary question?

Mr. Harkness: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his offer to send me a copy of his speech, but he has already done so. It is on this basis that I asked the question about beef. I would respectfully point out that if a member of the government makes a statement that is of great importance to one segment of industry in this country, then I think it is quite in order, and always has been in this house, for members to ask that minister for the basis upon which he made the statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not my understanding of the rules. It is certainly not what the book says.

GRAIN

WHEAT—ASSISTANCE TO CANADIAN FARMERS TO REDUCE ACREAGE

Mr. George Muir (Lisgar): In view of the fact that there is such a large surplus of