

Soviet Wheat Sale 'Ineptly Managed,' Senate Panel Says

WASHINGTON, July 28 (UPI) —Senate investigators charged today that the United States grain sale to the Soviet Union in 1972 was "ineptly managed" from start to finish.

As a result, they said, taxpayers' money went to waste, food prices increased and public confusion resulted.

The conclusion was reached by the Senate Permanent Investigations subcommittee on the basis of a long inquiry and a series of public hearings.

In the summer of 1972, the Soviet Union bought more than 700 million bushels of grain from the United States, including 25 per cent of the nation's wheat crop.

'Great Grain Robbery'

Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, chairman of the subcommittee, charged that "the great American grain robbery" was born, nurtured and consummated in a climate of secrecy and bureaucratic negligence. "The Russians and the large grain companies reaped the major benefits," he said.

Q Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois, the ranking Republican on the panel, said that

"out of the Russian grain deal, U.S. consumers got product shortages and higher prices."

The report said that Earl L. Butz, who was then Secretary of Agriculture, had seriously underestimated the impact of the sales.

The report said the deal had created a shortage in domestic supplies, which drove up the price of flour-based products. It also raised the price of feed grains, and thereby the costs of meat, poultry and dairy products.