

*Wheat Export Prices*

a crop failure or a poor crop last year being permitted to make up for lost income in the coming year? I think this is a very fair proposal which should be tried through 1969-70. If it proves successful I do not see why a continuous quota should not become a permanent system, as long as the grain surplus may continue.

Another possibility is the addition, with affidavits if necessary, of the number of bushels farmers may not have been able to deliver on the five bushel quota by July 31 because of the vagaries of boxcar distribution to their authorized deliveries in their 1969-70 quota books. There is also the suggestion that the Wheat Board inspect the grain on the farm, grade it, seal it and pay the initial payment on it with delivery to be made when space becomes available over and above the new crop year quotas. Solving this dilemma would cost the government very little, perhaps nothing at all, but it would go a long way toward demonstrating the good faith of the government and its understanding of farmers' needs and feelings. Lacking such a solution I fear that many farmers will have their gross incomes arbitrarily reduced by up to 50 per cent and as anyone remotely knowledgeable about grain farming will recognize even a five bushel quota is not sufficient to pay operating costs.

Again, I plead for the appointment of a transport controller to co-ordinate grain movement. An effective controller would have averted the various bottlenecks we experienced throughout the season and would have prevented the anxiety and difficulties that I know we are confronted with now and will be in the next ten days. Many of the suggestions I have just made would cost the taxpayers little or nothing; others could cost a considerable sum. The question has been raised as to how such expenditures can be justified. Let me offer these few suggestions.

First, the government has a responsibility with regard to the minimum prices under the I.G.A. which I referred to earlier. Second, for several years farmers have been encouraged by government and other food experts to expand production. They did so in good faith and are now left holding the bag. Third, our Liberal farm program in the 1968 election campaign included an undertaking to export 1.3 billion bushels of wheat in three years and we are far behind in progress toward that goal. Fourth, the same program included a proposal for farm income maintenance and now is an appropriate time to put the proposal into operation.

[Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia).]

Fifth, other sectors of the economy have been able to organize, with government encouragement, to raise their prices, their profits, their professional fees and their wages to keep their incomes in line with costs. Farmers have been unable to do this, at least partly because of inadequate marketing legislation. Sixth, other Canadians are receiving varying amounts of government assistance. Examples are dairy farmers, fishermen, people requiring low rental housing, the auto industry, mining industries, special assistance to the maritimes and so on. Seventh, wheat and Canada are almost synonymous and the wheat industry will continue to be of major importance to the national economy and deserves some temporary special assistance to keep it viable and from becoming bankrupt.

Time will not permit me mentioning other desirable programs but I urge immediate action on these suggestions, especially on the guarantee of the I.G.A. floor price and on some system of equalizing delivery opportunities.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would permit a question, I should like to ask him whether he has submitted these proposals to the government. If so, could he tell the house whether any member on the government side listened to him and what hope he has that any of his suggestions will be adopted.

**Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia):** In answer to the question I should say I have submitted some of these ideas to the government at various times and I am in the process of submitting them again. I have not had favourable answers yet but I am still hoping.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas). I think he has made a far greater contribution to this debate than either the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) or the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) or the two of them together. I can assure him that if the government would listen to his views we could go home for the evening instead of being here through the night in an effort to support some of the things he has said. I regret very much, however, that the hon. member had to apologize for the action and the manners of some of the people last week in front of the Prime Minister. I certainly