

International Wheat Agreement

pressing for such a reduction. If this were to happen it would put Canadian producers in a very unenviable and precarious income position.

There is a greater onus on the Canadian representatives to these talks than on the representatives of any other country, for the reason that it is only in Canada that grain producers, farmers, are expected to bear the brunt of international price fluctuations without any kind of price stabilization and support by government.

● (4:10 p.m.)

If the United States, for example, succeeds in obtaining an agreement—as we are told it is attempting to do—toward a reduction, then of course this in the United States will be cushioned by the effect of an increase in government price support or subsidy. If the Canadian representatives fail—and of course similarly this is a multilateral negotiation—the government will have to take responsibility and work toward possibly the necessity of a program of price support in respect of grain marketing. So I can only express the hope that in the course of the next short while the negotiation of the Kennedy round will come speedily toward finalization and that there will be a better level of prices which will be reflected in the Canadian economy, and which will help the problem of the cost price squeeze facing agriculture.

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the statement by the Minister of Trade and Commerce in respect of the signing of the protocol agreement—the extension. This statement did not say much more than what I heard last year on this subject. I should like to remind hon. members, as did the hon. member who spoke previously, that I do not know what the other minister of trade and commerce was basing his assurance on when he assured us there would be an agreement on price stabilization last year. Nevertheless this exchange of practically two billion bushels of grain between the different countries involved, of which we are required to furnish approximately one million tons, for our country represents quite a sector of our economy, and especially the producers of this grain.

There is an extension without coming to any kind of a final agreement with regard to the floor price of the wheat or cereal, because the cereal agreement is not terminated yet and we do not know when it will be. As the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton)

mentioned, it might be next year or in two years; we never know how long these discussions will be carried on. In the meantime our Canadian producers are left more or less on the fence.

We know this might last for one year; what is going to come next? I do agree with the proposal of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle that we should insist on the United States government coming to a final agreement in respect of stabilizing the world price of wheat which would give a fair share to Canadian as well as any other producers. This price support I think is a thing which the farmers have been asking for. It seems to me Canadians and the Canadian government should be striving to obtain this; other countries are requesting it.

Now we are faced with just a renewal of the part time agreement for another year; it is an extension. I would have liked the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) to say at least what he expected out of this renewal, and to have told us whether there was any definite time in which he could foresee this agreement, so as to give assurance to the Canadian farmers.

As I said at the beginning, this is a one million ton business proposition; it represents a great deal to Canadian producers. Because of Canada's position within such an agreement and because of our large contribution, possibly we should have the most to say. I think the minister in his dealings with Washington should strive to come to a final agreement, and not only a renewal. He should endeavour to have a definite policy agreed upon in respect of wheat and world prices to give Canadians a higher price. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle mentioned 20 cents. If it is possible to give more, then give them more; if not, give them something definite and let us not always play the sidelines while Washington plays the main line.

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I regret that my colleague from Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) is not here this afternoon; he is unavoidably absent. I should like to make one or two comments on the statement made by the minister. Surely all Canadians recognize the importance of this particular agreement. Since we know that the extension is just being made now on a yearly basis, I do not think this contributes in any way to the stability of the pricing or the stability of our agricultural economy.

As the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) has pointed out, a great many