

*International Wheat Agreement*

**Mr. Caron:** Would the minister have this convention printed in French?

**Mrs. Fairclough:** In answer to hon. members who have spoken previously, I would say that the convention was tabled, as I said, on April 9, 1957. There are 100 or so copies available, and the ones I saw were all in English. I daresay it would not be difficult to translate it, but I am not sure whether we have any translated copies.

**Mr. Caron:** May we have it translated and given to us in French?

**Mrs. Fairclough:** I would be very happy to arrange that.

Motion agreed to.

**TRADE****WHEAT—MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF  
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT**

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Minister of Trade and Commerce)** moved:

That it is expedient that the Houses of Parliament do approve the international wheat agreement opened for signature at Washington, D.C., on April 6, 1959, and that this house do approve the same.

He said: Mr. Speaker, on March 10 I announced to the house the successful conclusion of negotiations for a new international wheat agreement at the United Nations wheat conference in Geneva. The new agreement was open for signature in Washington from April 6 to April 24, and on April 22 the Canadian ambassador to the United States, Mr. Heeney, signed the agreement on behalf of Canada, subject to ratification by parliament.

As at May 31 the governments of 26 importing countries and of all nine exporting countries had signed the agreement. The house will note that the United Kingdom is a signatory to the new agreement. Four of the smaller importing countries listed in the agreement have not yet signed, but their accession to the agreement, as well as that of several other importing countries which are members of the current international wheat agreement but did not participate in the conference, is expected to take place before December 1, 1959, which is the final date stipulated in the agreement.

The exporting countries now include Italy, Mexico and Spain—previously importing countries—in addition to Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Sweden and the United States. Instruments of acceptance following ratification must be deposited before July 16, in order that the new agreement enters fully into force on August 1, on the expiry of the current agreement.

This new agreement has the full support of the principal producer organizations in western Canada. The leaders of these organizations, who are members of the advisory committee of the Canadian wheat board, formed part of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations wheat conference. I should like to add in this connection that, as in previous negotiations, the counsel and judgment of these men, reflecting their mature experience in wheat affairs, gave valued support to the contribution made by the Canadian delegation to the conference.

The house will expect me at this time to give a broad outline of the new agreement and its main features. The 1959 agreement is new not only in the sense that it will succeed and replace the 1956 agreement on its expiry on July 31; it is also new in that it is different and broader in concept, scope and content than any of the three previous agreements concluded since 1949. In this sense it will mark a new era for the international wheat council, which should now provide an enlarged framework with realistic terms of reference directed to the practical and urgent needs of the world wheat situation as it is and as it has been developing.

The principal objectives of the new international wheat agreement remain the same, namely the assurance of supplies to importing countries and of markets to exporting countries at equitable and stable prices, and the overcoming of the serious hardship caused to producers and consumers by burdensome surpluses and critical shortages of wheat. However, these objectives have now been significantly broadened to include the expansion and freest possible flow of the international trade in wheat and flour in the interests of both exporting and importing countries; the encouragement of increased consumption of wheat and wheat flour generally, particularly as a means of improving health and nutrition, and the furtherance of international co-operation in connection with world wheat problems.

In order to appreciate fully the significance of these broader objectives, perhaps it may be useful to refer briefly to some of the background to the new agreement, and this may also help to give point to the changes in its operational clauses. Hon. members will recall that the three previous agreements of 1949, 1953 and 1956 were based essentially on reciprocal undertakings by exporting and importing countries. At the maximum price, exporting countries were committed to supply guaranteed quantities to importing countries; and at the minimum price, the importing countries were committed to purchase guaranteed quantities from the exporting