

Wheat Export Prices

receive a copy of the report, which will probably be at the same time the hon. member receives it, I expect to have something to say about it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S.O. 26**TRADE****WHEAT—REDUCTION IN U.S. EXPORT PRICES—
THREAT TO CANADIAN ECONOMY**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands) moved that the house do now adjourn.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my reason for moving this motion relates to the announcement, made last Friday by the government of the United States that that country was reducing some of its wheat prices by 12 cents per bushel. This statement has been reflected in the announcement just made in Winnipeg that the Canadian Wheat Board has reduced its prices for hard wheat by two cents to as much as seven cents per bushel, depending on grade, and for durum wheat by 11½ cents per bushel. These reductions, which bring the price well below the minimum price set by the International Grains Arrangement, further aggravate a situation that has been growing increasingly more serious over the past nine or ten months.

It should hardly be necessary to tell the house that western agriculture is in a deplorable state. Last week the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made a visit to the prairies, and I think if anyone is conscious of the fact that the wheat growers of western Canada find themselves in desperate straits it is the Prime Minister.

But it should not have been necessary for the Prime Minister personally to visit the prairie provinces in order to find out that the western farmers are in the financial doldrums. A standing committee of this house, the Agricultural Committee, visited western Canada and submitted a report to the house, a report that I assume the Prime Minister and his colleagues read. That report indicated that the wheat growers of western Canada faced virtual bankruptcy, and urged upon the government the need for an infusion of cash income into the pockets of the prairie farmers.

Apparently the Prime Minister either did not read the report or he did not believe what [Mr. Basford.]

was said in it, for he undertook to visit the west himself. It is too bad, I think, that we had to have noisy demonstrations to convince the Prime Minister of Canada that the farmers are, to say the least, upset.

The prairie farmer is a very patient person. He has put up with a lot of hardships. He is the one person in our economy who buys in a protected market but has to depend upon the world market to determine the price that he will get for his produce. Over the years the prairie farmer has been caught in a cost-price squeeze, with the price of almost everything that he has to buy going up and the price of most of his produce going down. He now finds himself in a catastrophic situation that borders on disaster.

I am glad that after spending six days on the prairies the right hon. gentleman finally told the farmers: "What you need is dough". If "dough" is money, then he is right. If he means by "dough" flour and wheat, the farmers have plenty of that. The western farmers need money, and the reason they need money is very obvious.

In their brief to the government the Canadian Federation of Agriculture pointed out that in this crop year there has been a reduction in grain receipts of \$430 million. There has been a \$140 million reduction in deliveries and a drop of \$290 million in Wheat Board spring payments, which in this crop year will amount to less than \$70 million compared with \$360 million in the previous crop year.

If this were a sudden crisis the farmers might weather the storm. But this situation has been continuing for some time. In the last crop year the farmers of western Canada received a final wheat payment of 17.8 cents per bushel less than they received in the previous year. Their final price for barley was down 9.4 cents per bushel, and for oats 1.5 cents per bushel.

Therefore, the western farmer has been facing essentially two problems. First of all he faces a reduced delivery, which means he is unable to sell all of the grain he has on hand. Secondly, he is getting a reduced price even for the grain which he is able to sell. Consequently, he finds himself in an impossible position.

When the Prime Minister was on the prairies he talked about the problem of helping out farmers, because there were rich farmers as well as poor farmers. The Prime Minister referred to the fact that some farmers, according to what he was told, had assets