

Wheat Market Meeting in Washington

has played and is continuing to play a leading role in very difficult circumstances in the achievement of these results. I would not like to give the impression that this Washington meeting has resolved all our difficulties, but I am encouraged by the constructive approach demonstrated by exporting countries at this meeting. The new arrangement for continuing consultation among exporting countries will facilitate more effective co-operation.

I regret, Mr. Speaker, that I will not be able to give any precision to the measures of corrective action referred to in the communiqué. I am anticipating questions that are to come. Wheat pricing is a highly sensitive matter, and I know that hon. members would not expect me to divulge specific marketing information which could undermine the day to day selling operations of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I think it was the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) who a few days ago suggested that one of the members of the official opposition should attend a university in order to be able to read and understand communiqués better than he had been able to interpret one. All the universities we have in this country would not be sufficient to enable anyone to understand what the minister has tried to tell us today. The final sentence in the minister's statement reads as follows:

I regret, Mr. Speaker, that I will not be able to give any precision to the measures of corrective action referred to in the communiqué.

In a previous sentence the minister said:

—I am encouraged by the constructive approach demonstrated by exporting countries at this meeting.

• (2:10 p.m.)

The minister has told us that the Washington meeting was another failure. This is not encouraging to the western farmer who during the past year or so has found himself under pressure by reason of not being able to deliver grain. The results of the meeting will be no encouragement to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who at the present time is visiting the west in an attempt to bring some kind of message of encouragement to the western farmers. It will be difficult for him to tell them that not only can they expect deliveries to be less but that their income will suffer accordingly.

I have before me a *Wall Street Journal* report dated June 19 which reads as follows:

As a result, to assure that ends meet, the Argentine government will start buying wheat in the world market. It was announced that a purchase

[Mr. Pepin.]

of 7,348,000 bushels will be made next week. Argentina will seek to buy the wheat from Canada, the U.S., Australia and Russia.

Argentina was among the countries which participated in the discussions. I cannot visualize how a Canadian minister can return from the United States and tell us that Canada has not been successful in concluding a sensible arrangement in respect of marketing our wheat. Apparently Argentina has some idea of how to deal with its marketing situation. In view of the fact a previous Liberal government assured the western farmers that there would be a minimum price of \$1.95½ a bushel, does the minister not think there is an obligation on the part of the present government to ensure that the Canadian farmer will receive this price? In view of the economic situation today I ask the government whether this might not be a desirable course to follow, especially since the government has suffered a failure not only at the last meeting but at previous ones?

I do not understand how any minister can expect us to begin the summer recess with the realization that we do not know whether there will even be a five bushel quota in many areas. Some farmers with low grades are not even able to obtain \$1.48 or \$1.45 a bushel. This is the kind of economic situation we face. Yet this government cannot give any assurance to the farmers or to their creditors. I believe the government has an obligation to the Canadian people. I ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce to telephone the Prime Minister who is out west and, considering the failure of the minister's mission in Washington, suggest a type of approach that will make the Prime Minister's trip a little easier.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the minister has been able to report to the house today. I am sure he has returned from a difficult mission. Judging from the communiqué it would seem that he probably is not too well satisfied with the results. The information he gave us is inconclusive. It is not the type of report upon which I could advise the farmers of my constituency to build firm hopes and make firm plans in respect of their general operations as grain farmers.

The International Grains Arrangement has been an ill-starred agreement from the time it was signed. Whether this is due to the fact that it was not carefully considered or because some of the parties did not feel they wanted to be wholly committed to it, I do not know.