

Wheat Export Prices

increased taxes? The farmer is being faced every day with cuts in revenues and, correspondingly, with an increase in production costs, living costs and taxes as well as an increase in the cost of doing his business.

Certainly, there can be no other path but to meet competition. If we are to stay in business in a competitive market, there is no other way. However, the corollary to this is, of course, that the producer cannot be permitted to suffer because of conditions over which he has no control and because he has voluntarily given up his selling initiative to the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. I say that the government has to go out and sell the wheat at the best price it can get in the world markets, but at the same time let the government pay a support price to the farmer which will ensure that he benefits from the full \$1.95½ a bushel that still stands as the agreed world minimum price. The Canadian wheat producer did exactly what the government urged him to do. He planted all the wheat he could. He was asked to become more efficient, to expand and to produce enough wheat to feed a starving and hungry world. He trusted the government promises to sell what he produced.

Now that the government has difficulty in selling wheat, something that it has by law a monopoly to do, it seeks to throw the whole burden into the laps of the producers. The recent U.S. action has precipitated an immediate problem, but it is just another problem within a much larger context.

We, in Canada, must get into step with the rest of the world. We have been left behind by our competitors. So far as I am concerned I believe that one cannot merchandise goods, whether it is grain, soap or vacuum cleaners, if one develops a negative attitude, and that is exactly what is happening here. While grain deals were being made, the government stood idly by losing sale after sale. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, a very amiable fellow, stayed in his place this afternoon seeking the advice of the Almighty. One could almost feel sorry for him, but may I say, with all due respect, that I am now convinced more than ever that the job of marketing our grain is beyond this man's capacity. I think he would do much better as a minister of culture, or perhaps as a goodwill ambassador for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in some of the hostile areas, such as the ones which the Prime Minister visited in western Canada. All that we heard from the minister today was a bandying of words to

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

defend his government for its positive inaction rather than laying down a formula for positive action. What we want is positive action to alleviate the immediate crisis and some long-term solutions for the future. One almost gets the impression that the government dislikes the fact that this debate is taking place. They attempt constantly to try to justify their position, blaming the opposition for misrepresentation and accusing us of being publicity seekers, even making suggestions about a stupid filibuster. When the Standing Committee on Agriculture went out west, it made a comprehensive study and proposed some solutions. When the Prime Minister went out west, the feelings of the western farmers were appropriately expressed. What more do they want?

Numerous recommendations have been submitted to this government. Solutions were offered by the government's own members, such as by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) and by other members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. Why were these solutions rejected? There have been many others and many briefs from the farm organizations throughout the country and from the Federation of Agriculture, as well as suggestions from members on both sides of the house. The answer we continually receive is that the policy is under review. This house, the people of the country in general and farmers in particular are entitled to know what the government intends to do to solve the problems of our once great agricultural industry.

• (12 midnight)

Our immediate problem, and the reason for this debate, is that we must sell our wheat and the return to the producer must be fair and equitable. If in order to do this we must modernize our whole system of marketing and distribution, let us start now. What has happened to the activities of the Grains Council? This was to be the great revolutionary mechanism for streamlining all our grain handling operations, producing, distributing and selling.

I suggest that as a start the nation's wheat selling apparatus should be thoroughly overhauled. The government has the obligation to undertake this task. I believe that in this day and age—the lunar age—the Wheat Board should be rejuvenated and its aims and objectives reviewed and upgraded. While it has the exclusive right to sell grain, it has subtle this right and responsibility to officially designated agents. It must be remembered that