

The Budget—Mr. Argue

just how bad the situation is. It is true that so far in this crop year a substantial quantity of grain has been marketed, but the great bulk of that grain was marketed in the early part of the year and as the months have gone by less and less grain has been sold. I wonder what the members of the cabinet would think if they were faced with the situation pointed out to me by the secretary of a farmers' union lodge in my constituency, Mr. T. W. Bennett of Willow Bunch. He points out that at a recent meeting of the Willow Bunch lodge the cash position of the farmers of that district was surveyed and the farmers were found to be so short of cash that it was decided to send a delegation to the rural municipality to see if the municipal council would provide the farmers with relief fuel so that they could sow their crops this spring. I wonder what members of the cabinet would think if they were farmers, had 5,000 bushels of wheat in their granaries and had to go and beg two or three barrels of gasoline from somebody in order to sow their 1954 crop.

If the farmers can only deliver seven bushels per acre farmers will suffer and the merchants in the small communities will suffer with them. Sales are getting smaller as the months and weeks go by. Two years ago, according to the *Wheat Review* of March, 1952, importing countries had bought 213 million bushels of wheat out of a total of 233 million bushels fixed as Canada's quota under the international wheat agreement. Over 90 per cent of all the grain contracted for had been sold by March 18. One year ago sales had fallen off considerably. Out of a quota of 235 million bushels 159 million had been purchased as of March 24, or approximately two-thirds of the quota under the agreement. The latest figures for this year, which are up to March 30, show that of Canada's quota of 163 million bushels under the international wheat agreement only 71 million bushels have been sold. In other words, even though there are only four months left in the present crop year Canada has supplied only 44 per cent of its quota under the agreement.

Sales are falling off week by week, but what does the government do about it? Literally nothing. It has been announced that the United States government has made gifts of wheat to Japan in conjunction with purchases by Japan of United States military equipment. On March 11 I asked the Minister of Trade and Commerce a question in that regard and in reply to my question whether such a gift was being made the minister said, as found at page 2883 of *Hansard*:

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that it is intended to give 500,000 tons of wheat to

Japan. In the second place, that would seem to be the business of the United States government regarding which that government would not welcome protests from other countries.

The minister had no knowledge of such a gift and said that no protests would be made. But, lo and behold, eight days later, in answer to a further question of mine on the same subject, he made this reply, as found at page 3148 of *Hansard*. Listen to this:

The United States informed Canada some weeks ago that they considered the food situation in Japan would warrant a gift of wheat and barley under section 550, and asked if we had objections.

Eight days before the minister said that he had no knowledge, and on March 19 he said that they knew about this transaction weeks before. The minister cannot be right both times, and certainly on one occasion he was misleading the house and misleading the country.

Mr. Martin: I am sure the hon. gentleman does not want to say that the Minister of Trade and Commerce was misleading the house. That is not parliamentary, and I am sure my hon. friend does not mean to leave that impression.

Mr. Argue: I meant exactly what I said. If I had meant to say anything else I would have said it. The minister has raised a point of order, Mr. Speaker, with respect to whether or not my statement that the Minister of Trade and Commerce was misleading the house is parliamentary. I submit to you that it is. It is my understanding of the rules that if I had said that the minister was deliberately attempting to mislead the house such a statement would not be in order. I leave the matter in the hands of the Speaker. I have no intention of withdrawing my remark unless the Speaker rules it unparliamentary, which I submit it is not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member must know that he cannot impute motives to another member of the house. When he says another member is misleading the house, he is imputing motives and I feel the hon. member should withdraw.

Mr. Argue: If my language was not strictly parliamentary, I withdraw that part of it that may be offensive to the rules of the house. And I leave those two statements side by side on the record, and say that the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) was wholly wrong on one occasion, and I also say that the Minister of Trade and Commerce is a sufficiently able man that he is not wrong very often without knowing it. Here are two statements that are completely opposite. Then he goes on to say:

We said that we were negotiating with Japan and we had objections at that time.