

Supply—Trade and Commerce

is concerned. There is one other matter with which I should like to deal.

An hon. Member: What about \$2 wheat?

Mr. Olson: I should like to answer questions from now until six o'clock if there were time. However, I wish to complete my remarks. I can see that other hon. members wish to speak on this subject. The hon. member for Rosthern, for example, is very anxious to get into the debate, as is the hon. member for Macleod and perhaps many others. I think one or two questions at the end of my remarks would be in order, but I do not want to use up all my time because there is very little left.

I think there is one other major point that should be raised because of what the hon. member for Springfield said. He complained that the government did not take any action during the months of July and August. I should like the hon. member to know that September 8 was the first day that the selling price of Canadian wheat was below the minimum price. Within three days the minister was in conference with the appropriate officials in Washington to try and reach some kind of understanding to correct this situation.

I can remember an incident when our minister was three days late arriving in Hong Kong. That was in 1961. I should like to talk about that. The situation now is quite different. Those three days taken by the minister were used to set up some positive plans, for fruitful discussion and positive action. I do not think hon. members opposite would like to talk about the three days that elapsed between the time positive action was taken and when somebody had to hurry to Hong Kong to make the announcement. There is quite a difference in the three days.

Mr. Cantelon: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Olson: No, the hon. member will not permit a question because there is not sufficient time, and that is the only reason. If hon. gentlemen opposite would care to do their homework they will find that immediately after the discussions which the minister held in Washington the price of wheat started to firm up.

Mr. Cantelon: Too late, and 15 cents too low.

Mr. Olson: Perhaps hon. members opposite would like to talk about the relationship of the government to the wheat board, and so on, so far as selling on foreign markets is concerned. I have sat in this house and listened to all the statements about the great job done by the previous administration in their aggressive selling of wheat. The hon. member for Bow River made that statement again today.

The only inference that can be taken from that remark of the hon. member for Bow River is that today the Canadian Wheat Board is not selling wheat aggressively. I do not accept that suggestion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Olson: I am very proud, and justifiably so, of the performance of the Canadian Wheat Board in connection with the sales of wheat to communist China, Russia and other countries. There is one thing that has always puzzled me. The former administration took office in June of 1957. They were in office for the balance of 1957, all of 1958, all of 1959 and all of 1960. Yet throughout that entire period there were no great announcements of any tremendous wheat sales. It took them four years to get started as far as these sales were concerned. What is the explanation for that delay of four years? The reason is very simple, if they would only admit it. There were no additional markets available to the Canadian Wheat Board until that time.

• (5:30 p.m.)

When that market became available, Mr. Chairman, the Canadian Wheat Board was there to sell wheat at the maximum price. The same situation obtained with the \$800 million transaction with the Soviet union in 1966. So, it is pretty clear that this old story about this aggressive selling dating back to around 1961 is losing some of its force. I think hon. members opposite would be well advised to let it quietly die away; it never did have any credence and the farmers understand that.

The hon. member for Bow River complained that the price is going down and at the same time complained that we are losing some of our markets. I am wondering what he expects the Canadian Wheat Board to do. If other competing countries initiate lower offering prices, what would the hon. member have the Canadian Wheat Board do? Hold the price, which would mean we would have no volume and consequently no sales? Or would