

International Wheat Agreement

be prepared to make a deal. If we do not make a deal, then we are back in the position where we have no wheat agreement. I have always had the feeling that if you have something to sell and you can see your way clear to selling it at a competitive price, you should sell it. I am afraid you would not meet with a very enthusiastic reception if you wanted to attach conditions to the deal.

Perhaps the federal government or some other body might like to do it, but I do not think it is sound government policy to talk about an escalator clause. There may be some way whereby it could be worked out, but I do not see it at the moment. To expect the world buyers, especially those countries which are in a rather unsound financial position with soft currencies and all these other troubles, to be receptive to the placing of an escalator clause in that wheat agreement, is not being realistic. It would be a difficult thing to do and possibly would endanger the agreement.

Now, I do not think there is very much more I want to say except that I can go back to my constituency with the knowledge that we have a wheat agreement and that the theory of marketing wheat in that way has been supported by our government. The government of Canada has not said that the British grain exchange is going to be open and other countries are going to put these foodstuffs on the free market, so why should we do that. If I went back and said this government thought that would be the desirable way of doing it, I would have a lot of trouble. I can go back to my constituency and say that our government has resisted that method; our government knows that the wheat board marketing system is good. They know they can stabilize wheat prices by following that system. I know quite well that my constituents are going to say the government has done a good job. From the comments I have had from my riding, I feel the people are going to say that, too.

What government introduced this type of wheat marketing under this type of wheat board? The government that is sitting over there. The people are going to say, if that government does that kind of thing then that is the government that should be doing it. I think they would be right in saying that. The wheat board has a lot of friends. I have never seen anyone in this house or out of it who has not been a friend of the wheat board, but in this house I hear from people who are saying: This is wrong with the wheat board; that is wrong with the wheat board; you should do something else; you should change it here or there. It would be the

[Mr. Larson.]

same thing if I were trying to do something and my friends said, "Oh, what you are trying to do is all right but you are doing it all wrong." In other words, it makes you feel as though every time they agree with you they have a knife behind your back, and when they say "I agree with you", to your face, they hit you in the back with the knife. That is what is happening to this wheat board.

I am very much surprised that this government does not say, "If you fellows do not want the wheat board when we have the best man we can get selling your grain, then go ahead and sell it yourself." That is what I have heard all over the place. I think it is about time we cleaned up all the criticism. The chairman of the wheat board in Winnipeg and the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) and his department have had as much experience in selling wheat as anyone in this country. I am sure that they are going to get the highest price for the maximum volume. If anyone knows how to get it, they know how to do so. I feel that the people of Canada are going to say the same thing. They are going to support the wheat marketing methods that we have. If we are to have wisdom in our public thinking, I do not think we should turn down the efforts that have been made and, so far as I am concerned, I support them. I think they are good. I think they will give us a sound wheat economy in Canada for many years.

Mr. J. S. Sinnott (Springfield): This is one of the most important pieces of business that have come before this house for some time, Mr. Speaker. I think the decision which has been reached by these forty-six trading nations, after almost seventeen full weeks of negotiation, is one of the most important events so far as Canada is concerned. I listened with great interest to the previous speakers, the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue), the member for Battle River (Mr. Fair), the member for Souris (Mr. Ross), and the member for Kindersley (Mr. Larson). They all seemed to be in agreement that what has been done has been a good thing for Canada. One member wanted to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds at the same time, but you just cannot do that. You have to be either for it or against it.

The hon. member said that we would like to have something better. We would all like to have something better. All these exporting nations would like to have something better. Nevertheless, the agreement which has been reached has been reached after long and tedious hours of negotiation. These representatives did not sit for one day, one hour or one week, but for seventeen weeks, before