

The Budget—Mr. J. A. Ross

reopened now it would be a revival of a debate on a subject which has been decided in the present session. On that ground I would rule the discussion out of order.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Mr. Speaker, I must certainly abide by your ruling, but the farmers do not consider the matter settled, by a long shot. I would just refer to the editorial page of the *Winnipeg Free Press* for March 30. Anyone who cares to read it will find it interesting material which will bring him up to date on the subject. However in view of your ruling I will not discuss the matter further.

According to the *Economic Annalist* of December 30, a study was made by officials of the Department of Agriculture of the costs that farmers are called upon to bear. According to that survey, which was carried out in the Gilbert Plains and Sifton farming section of central Manitoba, it was found, as set out in this pamphlet, that a number of the farmers could not pay their expenses and support their families from the revenues derived from their farms. Those findings are referred to at pages 1708 to 1710 of *Hansard* for April 6, which reports the discussion of estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

There is another matter with respect to wheat that has not been decided as yet. It was taken up with the government after Easter. It has to do with the \$48 million to the extent of which the farmers of western Canada subsidized the consumers of Canada when all the other controls were taken off for a period of years following the war.

Mr. Speaker: Was not that question fully discussed when the amendment to the wheat board act was before the house? If my memory serves me correctly, there was an amendment to the effect that 25 cents per bushel should be paid to the wheat farmers, and in that 25-cent proposal was the question the hon. member proposes to discuss now. I do not think it would be in accordance with our practice to revive that question at this time.

Mr. Ross (Souris): Again I must abide by your ruling, sir, but a delegation did interview the government after Easter on this very matter. It certainly has a bearing on the budget, but I shall abide by your ruling.

I assume I shall be in order in making some reference to the international wheat agreement and the bearing it has on the cost of living in Canada today. This international wheat agreement means that right now, in April, the wheat farmers of the prairies are subsidizing all the consumers of wheat bread in Canada to the extent of 36 cents per bushel of wheat. This international wheat

agreement is going to mean a loss of many more hundreds of millions of dollars to the wheat producers of the prairie provinces. This is something that has not yet been discussed in this house; it is a new angle. I think the government should have provided in that agreement an escalator clause for annual consideration or adjustment.

Mr. Speaker: Was not that wheat agreement discussed earlier this session?

Mr. Ross (Souris): Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Speaker: I was under the impression that it was discussed.

Mr. Knowles: Is Your Honour not confusing two different wheat agreements, namely, the United Kingdom wheat agreement, which had a duration of four years and which has ended, and the wider and now current international wheat agreement? They are two separate agreements. I submit that while there was a fairly full discussion about the settlement of the Canada-United Kingdom wheat agreement, which had a duration of four years, there has been no decision during this session with regard to the international wheat agreement. I do not agree with all the things the hon. member is saying, but I think he has the right to say them.

Mr. Speaker: For the time being I shall not rule against the hon. member. It is for the house to decide whether or not this question has been discussed previously and settled.

Mr. Graydon: Do we take it from your ruling, sir, that you are outlawing the term "wheat" from the debates of this house?

Mr. Speaker: Far from it. I am simply ruling that, in accordance with the practice of this house, questions which have been decided cannot be brought up in future debates in the same session. In effect, you cannot refer to a debate which is closed.

Mr. Quelch: There has been no amendment or resolution moved during this session with regard to the international wheat agreement. There has only been reference to it, but there has been no discussion based on a resolution or amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Apparently no hon. member takes the stand that the international wheat agreement has been discussed this session. If the international wheat agreement has not been discussed this session, then of course I cannot rule it out of order. If it has been discussed, I would rule it out of order. I shall go this far at the present time: a discussion on the subject of wheat which has been settled at this session would be out of order now.