

Loss to Canada of World Wheat Market

[Translation]

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I was paired with the member for Cape Breton North and Victoria (Mr. Muir). Had I voted, I would have voted against the amendment.

[English]

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Speaker, I was paired with the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. McLean). Had he been here and enabled me to vote, I would have voted for the amendment.

[Translation]

Mr. Forest: Mr. Speaker, I was paired with the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Ballard); had I voted, I would have voted against the amendment.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The question is now on the main motion.

ALLEGED LOSS OF WORLD WHEAT MARKET

Mr. C. S. Smallwood (Battle River-Camrose): Mr. Speaker, my grievance tonight concerns the loss to Canada of the world wheat market and its effect on Canadian farmers and the Canadian economy in general. I wish the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) were here tonight. However, in his absence I hope that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) or some responsible minister on the government front benches will reply tonight to what I have to say.

An hon. Member: They are all irresponsible.

Mr. Smallwood: It may be asking a great deal to ask for a responsible minister to answer tonight, but I did my best.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Smallwood: Tonight we do not want to hear any backbench speeches and excuses regarding this very, very serious matter. We want to hear from the front benches how the government intends to remedy the situation in which we find ourselves. I could speak tonight about the international wheat agreement, but why flog a dead horse? The front benches on the government side behaved like Nero; they sat and fiddled while Rome burned. They sit fiddling even now, while we are losing the world wheat market. I should like to read to the house part of an article

[Mrs. Wadds.]

which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* of October 19. This article says:

Canada's trade surplus narrowed to \$77.7 million in August from \$127.1 million a year earlier—

Further on the article says:

Smaller wheat shipments this year also helped to bring about the year-to-year drop. Lower shipments to countries, including the Soviet Union, China and Japan, played a major role in the 23 per cent drop in exports to the so-called other countries.

An article which appeared in the *Western Producer* of October 19 informs us as follows:

Japan's wheat purchases from Canada fell off late in the last crop year when world market prices dropped below the agreed schedule under the new international wheat agreement.

The Japanese food agency said wheat imports from Canada this year might decline 10 per cent from last year and the gap would be filled by U.S. wheat.

What did our government do while the United States were selling at a fire sale price? Did they go to the United States and protest? No, they sat in their cozy chairs here in Ottawa. Like the Liberals we knew in 1954 and 1955, they do not care about western farmers; they are not interested in western Canada. Exports of Canadian wheat, at 5.2 million bushels during the week ending October 4, were less than half the amount exported during the same week last year. Wheat exports so far for this year have been 47,600,000 bushels, which is far below the 118,500,000 bushels exported by the same time last year.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Is the government interested in the farmers of Canada? No, it is not. Tonight I want to speak on behalf of the farmers of Alberta whom I represent. Being a farmer myself I know their problems. What can we find in Alberta today? We find discrimination. In Alberta there are 106 points on a quota system, which means the farmer can sell 400 bushels of wheat on a unit. The story is different in Saskatchewan. What did the Treasury Board do during the general election in the province of Saskatchewan? It interfered with the Canadian Wheat Board, which raised the quotas in that province during the election. If the government wishes to challenge what I am saying, let them stand up tonight and disagree with me. There is only silence over there. This is like fishing: You throw in a line and if you do not get a fish, you do the best you can.