

International Wheat Agreement

money safely and pay that additional price, greatly to the benefit of everyone in Canada. I have mentioned this several times, and I hope the Minister of Trade and Commerce will not get up and treat it lightly. The Minister of Trade and Commerce is one of the greatest men in Canada, but I think he will grant that there are several things he still can learn. That is one of them.

I should like to point out, as I have previously pointed out, that during world war I under the finance act of 1914 the Canadian minister of finance created \$50 million of money and bought Canadian wheat at a reasonable price to be turned over to Great Britain free of cost and with no interest. Great Britain was allowed as much time as she needed to pay it back and had the additional privilege of paying it back in goods. What I have just said is a matter of the most solemn importance to this house.

That was done when the production of this nation was not more than \$4 billion. I have not the exact amount at my disposal, but in 1939 our production was somewhere near \$6 billion, so I would imagine that \$4 billion would be a liberal estimate of our production in 1914. Today our production is \$23 billion. If this nation could absorb \$50 million in wartime, during world war I, is it not just utterly contemptible to suggest that it could not now absorb a great deal more money to be created and spent into circulation, debt free?

I do not propose to go into this matter in detail now because it would be slightly out of order, but after all when you are in trouble is the time to think about new things when you do not know what else to do. The finance act of 1914 was re-enacted as the Finance Act of 1923. The men who were in this parliament in 1914 and in 1923 were not afraid of "funny" money. We hear silly Liberals mentioning "funny" money to the point where you would think they should be taken out and horsewhipped for their sheer ignorance in using such an expression.

Those men of 1914 and of 1923 created money. The minister of finance under the act of 1923 was given the power to go on creating it to be used. They did not call it "funny" money because they knew a lot more than many people know today. What is the matter with creating government money to pay this extra 5 cents per bushel? Or what is the matter with calling on the Bank of Canada for money, letting that bank lend the government the money interest free?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member a moment ago made reference to whether or not he was in order. I thought he admitted that what he was saying was perhaps slightly out

[Mr. Blackmore.]

of order, but I think the hon. member now should consider the international wheat agreement. I know that reference has been made to the fact that Great Britain was not in the agreement but I think at that point, although reference can be made to it, it should not be made the subject of a 40-minute speech.

I will have to ask the hon. member now to speak about the international wheat agreement.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate your opinion and I am going to bow to your ruling. However, do not let anyone get up in this house or on the hustings and say this government cannot do anything about this matter, because in doing so he will be lying, that is all.

I do not propose to say anything more at present along these lines. As I have said several times—and I said so on the trade and commerce estimates—I have very little use for a person who gets up and rails against a condition but offers no way of avoiding the difficulty or of solving the problem. I merely have sought to avoid being under condemnation in accordance with my own rules.

I say that this government should at once set about to determine ways and means of paying that extra 5 cents. Then let members of this government go over to Britain for the coronation and ask Britain if she will consider going into the wheat agreement, as far as Canada is concerned, if we will let her have wheat at \$2 a bushel and we will pay the extra 5 cents, doing it out of created money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, there are a few points that have been raised in the debate which I should like to touch on briefly.

Reference was made to the fact that initial payments for the crop year 1953-54 have not been announced. It is difficult to get the last word on the situation, but I think I can give enough information to satisfy the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Ross) as far as advice for planning crop production is concerned. For wheat the initial price this year was \$1.40 a bushel. That will be the lowest price for next year for northerns. We would like to see more durum wheat produced; therefore the minimum initial payment for durum will be \$1.50 per bushel.

A good deal has been said about surpluses, and that prices must fall, so some hon. members may think it is venturesome to suggest those prices under present conditions. Were some major country to fail to ratify the agreement—all have signed, but sometimes the ratifications required go wrong—that could upset the agreement. Nevertheless I would point