

and to express our thanks to the Czechoslovakian ambassador who has carried on the negotiations on behalf of his government.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the succession of sales agreements that have been concluded in recent months all indicate the value of having a wheat marketing board and carrying on an orderly wheat marketing policy. In spite of the criticism we have heard from south of the border with regard to fixed price agreements, I think in the long run both the importers of wheat and the producers of wheat in Canada will gain from this arrangement.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): We in this group, Mr. Speaker, welcome the announcement that has just been made in respect of the sale of grain to Czechoslovakia. We offer our congratulations to the wheat board upon negotiating this deal. I think, too, we would like to take this opportunity of supporting the government in the action they have taken to provide the credit that was necessary to bring the deal to fruition.

I think the succession of large grain sales made during the last few months points to the fact that Canada is resuming her position as the major exporter in the international wheat market, and it is particularly welcome following the excellent crop Canada has had, and which is now completely harvested and in storage.

[Translation]

Mr. Real Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that we have learned of this new sales agreement signed with another of the countries behind the iron curtain.

These countries recognize, I am sure, the superiority of our grain or wheat production; no doubt this is why they are interested in buying part of our national production.

However, our eastern farmers will see with a certain anxiety, perhaps even with anguish, ships sailing along the St. Lawrence, and filled with wheat for Czechoslovakia and Russia.

In addition to the wheat which is being sold to the countries behind the iron curtain we would like to see some wheat being sold inside our own borders, and more particularly along the St. Lawrence; our eastern farmers would then also benefit from our production at a price which would be every bit as profitable as the price which is offered foreign countries.

Mr. Speaker, we like to hear statements of that kind coming from the minister about sales to other countries, but we sincerely hope that the day is at hand when the Canadian government will announce a policy favourable to our eastern farmers.

Ship Construction Program Announced

[Text]

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs arising out of his statement concerning the wheat agreement with Czechoslovakia. Is the statement that he made to the house today a duplication of the statement he made to the people of the United States while in that country over the week end, speaking to a university group, or is this another statement he has issued to the Canadian people?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would hardly call it a duplication but rather an amplification.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

REFERENCE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT TO COMMITTEE

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Minister of Finance) moved:

That the public accounts, volumes 1, 2 and 3, and the report of the Auditor General for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1962, laid before the house on January 21, 1963, be referred to the standing committee on public accounts.

Motion agreed to.

MINES AND TECHNICAL SURVEYS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SHIP CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Hon. W. M. Benidickson (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce to the house departmental programming plans for the construction of 12 survey and research ships at a cost of \$50 million, with tender calls during the next five years.

The ships are to be used to meet the vital needs for charting and studying Canada's tremendous expanses of coastal and inland waters. The new plans simply mean that the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys has an impressive shipbuilding program to replace obsolete ships and to provide the additional ships so urgently needed for hydrographic and oceanographic work.

The new program will be carried out in two phases. Phase one calls for the construction of five vessels at a cost of some \$20 million, with tender call during the next 14 months. Phase two covers the construction of the remaining seven vessels at a cost of \$30 million.

The vessels in phase one comprise (1) two major survey and research vessels, at a cost of from \$5 million to \$6 million each, for the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, designed for