

International Wheat Agreement

allowed the British traders to talk him out of additional money on this deal. The western wheat growers regret that very much. We have other wheat moneys coming; we are still waiting and will continue to wait.

As far as the wheat board is concerned, I believe that that organization must be kept in existence. Like the hon. member who resumed his seat a short time ago, I believe that the sooner the grain exchange is put out of business forever the better it will be for the Canadian producers. They are wasting a lot of money putting out publications of different kinds condemning the international wheat agreement and trying to get farmers dissatisfied with it so that they can get back to their own gambling games, gambling with food products and making easy money for a number of operators in the organization.

Mr. F. H. Larson (Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the universal support of this international wheat agreement that has come from all sides of the chamber. Certain regrets have been advanced by the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Fair) as to the British not going into this agreement, and I think those are important. We have given a good deal of aid to the British. I admit that during the war it was probably for our own benefit to make sure that the war remained in Europe rather than have the European outposts liquidated and the war brought over here.

On the other hand, those people were fighting for their lives and we were helping them, and I think they should recognize that as a point. As the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) said, the British are being guaranteed wheat at a reasonable price. I think it is to their advantage to sign this agreement. However, they have not chosen to do so, and as we do not run the British government I do not think there is much we can do about it.

The hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) said that he was not afraid that there would be dumping of wheat on the world market to depress prices if Canada and the United States had an agreement that they would not dump wheat. It is quite obvious that, with the Canadian wheat board and the United States policy in connection with farm produce prices, there will be no dumping. We have our wheat board so that we can advance payments and hold the crop until it can be put on the market in a normal and orderly way and not cause dumping.

As far as costs of production are concerned, I agree that it would be nice if we could get costs down. We have to sell our wheat on a competitive market. We must realize that the wheat board operates for the advantage of

the three prairie provinces as to export wheat sales. If we hope to maintain those advantages in the western provinces we should not push too hard. If about three-quarters of the people of Canada decided that they were not going to support our wheat board and our system of wheat marketing, then I am afraid we would run into considerable difficulty. We want the people of Canada to continue to support our position as far as the marketing of wheat is concerned.

I agree completely with the argument advanced by the hon. member for Assiniboia against a dual system of marketing wheat. We had no stability in the marketing of grains in this country until the present system of wheat board marketing was established. To revert to a dual system of marketing again would create all kinds of difficulties. I do not want to enumerate them particularly but I will say that the wheat board is in an untenable position if it only gets wheat when the price is below the board price. It has no way of getting out of such a difficulty except through federal aid which would be considered to be a subsidy. I do not think those of us in western Canada want to try to put that across, and also I do not think we could get support for it.

I am not going to say anything about the complete closing of the grain exchange. It certainly has proven very desirable to do our marketing as we have done under the wheat board. The chairman of the wheat board out in Winnipeg has been in the grain business for a long time and I am sure that he will advocate the system which is most advantageous to the farmers. If he feels that he can sell their products to better advantage through a certain amount of operation of the grain exchange. I am sure that he will do so. If he feels that the present partial operation of the exchange will become disadvantageous I am sure that he will advocate closing it completely.

There is another point with respect to the disadvantage of our strong dollar position in the United States. I realize that as far as selling agricultural products is concerned we are at a disadvantage if we must in effect get more money from the world to maintain our prices. On the other hand we have a reciprocal advantage in buying what we buy with high value Canadian money because that money will buy more on foreign markets. I would say that the advantages and disadvantages probably level off.

It was stated by an hon. member that he feels that the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) is right in saying that it would be more difficult to have an international wheat agreement with Britain