

Wheat Export Prices

30, 1969 these stocks had reached a record level of 2.4 billion bushels. At the conclusion of the Kennedy Round negotiations in the spring of 1967, stocks amounted to only 1.4 billion bushels. In the meantime Canada has maintained its share of the export market at about 20 per cent. Again, gentlemen, I should like to refer to the editorial with which I started:

The best that can be hoped from next week's debate is that it might produce some ideas to assist the government. If so, surely it will be only too glad to accept them.

Unfortunately, the debate may be short on ideas and long on politics.

No amount of talking should be allowed to conceal some important facts. One is that the Canadian government did not create the wheat surplus; it is world-wide. Another is that farmers were warned repeatedly during the bumper-sale years of this decade that they could not depend on Communist countries as steady customers. The big sales to the Soviet Union and China came about because of droughts and wheat-crop failures in those countries. Some of the fat profits from those years should have been used by wheat farmers to branch out into other lines of production.

The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands was caught when the debate was sprung on him a little early. He did not have a single, solitary suggestion. However, this was not so in respect of the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin). His first suggestion was that we expand the power and authority of the Wheat Board by giving unlimited ability to enter into the price war, with no holds barred. Is that what Canada should do? Are we to take the leadership in this price war? He also wants to reverse the trend to urbanization. He wants to keep the people down on the farm and make sure that the taxpayers of Canada support those who want to stay on the farms. This is really a very progressive move and one, I suggest, we would hardly expect from a member of his party. The third suggestion was that we should accept foreign currency and invest in fertilizer plants. What would these foreign countries which would have these fertilizer plants do with the production they would have? Would they grow grain?

The Leader of the New Democratic party referred to the A.I.D. record and the Leader of the Opposition referred to the acreage payments. I think we might deal with both these at once. I should like to refer to the same O.E.C.D. figures referred to by the leader of the New Democratic party. They indicate that France is first with .95 per cent of

[Mr. Mahoney.]

its national income devoted to A.I.D., followed by Portugal with .77 per cent and Australia with .74 per cent. One might think it strange to inquire as to how much of France's foreign aid program is devoted to payments of notes due to its colonial empire, how much of that aid goes to north Africa? In the case of Portugal, one might question whether Mozambique or Angola have anything to do with this. In Australia we might think of the Polynesian empire and New Guinea colonies; possibly even the Vietnamese participation.

● (9:10 p.m.)

The other countries which have any significant amount of foreign aid over that of Canada, are the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands. This brings us down to 6/100ths of one per cent of the national income over the Canadian contribution. In each case we are dealing with ex-Imperial nations, and in each case I suspect strongly that the foreign aid programs are coloured very much by contributions to former colonies.

Let us look specifically at the aid program so far as Canadian grain is concerned. We could increase income by straight payments to farmers or we could increase it by moving wheat through food aid programs or through other subsidies. The opposition continues to refer to the three crop payments of \$40 million each it paid to the farmers in 1958, 1960 and 1962, totalling \$120 million. In those same years only \$66 million worth of grain was moved out in foreign aid. I feel very strongly that farmers would be quite prepared and quite happy, indeed would prefer, to accept a government payment by way of foreign aid than receive subsidies. We also believe in moving wheat and we have done so with our foreign aid program on a scale almost four times as large as that of the previous government.

During the four crop years from 1958-59 through to 1961-62 the foreign aid expenditures in wheat by the Canadian government amounted to something over \$66 million. In the most recently completed crop years these have amounted to \$240 million, almost four times as much. The total amount of foreign aid, plus crop payment indulged in by the previous government, was about 25 per cent less than the total in foreign aid exports of grain by the present government.

The hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Bigg) in the midst of a diatribe involving the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), which quite frankly assumed almost pathological overtones at some points, suggested that the