

*Alleged Failure to Aid Western Farmers*

of exports was at 331 million bushels, which is almost the same level as last year.

With regard to credit facilities, the government has come forward and amended the credit facilities that are available to improve the competitive position of Canadian wheat. Provision has been made in the estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce for the amount of \$6 million for the sale of wheat to selected countries on extended terms at concessional interest rates. Again every effort is being made to interest developing countries in Canadian wheat on these terms. The Wheat Board does not lack government support. Members of the Wheat Board and of my department have been working with great intelligence in order to secure sales and I regularly receive letters and telephone calls of congratulation. The callers are not complimenting me of course; they are complimenting those people who are developing our sales so excellently.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I do not claim to be an expert on wheat but I wish that other hon. members who do not know much more about the subject than I do would stop pretending to be experts. I am referring here to the kind of thing the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) said. Suddenly, he does not think the I.G.A. is such a good idea.

**An hon. Member:** The minister does not know much, either.

**Mr. Pepin:** I just said that. It is all very easy to rewrite history, or to be wise by hindsight. It is all very well to say, "This is what we should have done." I tell the hon. member that he and his colleagues should not try to advise the government and then turn around and blame us for accepting the advice. The International Grains Agreement was negotiated—

**Mr. Gleave:** Will the minister permit a question. Is that agreement not an agreement negotiated by governments?

**Mr. Pepin:** That is precisely what I am about to say. It was negotiated, and the Canadian government in those negotiations accepted the advice among others, of the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board which is made up of representatives of producers of the Canadian wheat industry. At that time all believed that they were proceeding in

[Mr. Pepin.]

the proper manner. It was believed that negotiations within the Kennedy round would bring greater benefits than negotiations outside the Kennedy round. The increase of 20 per cent in prices which was agreed to was in part brought about by the mood, the Kennedy round discussions created. The hon. member was saying that there are fewer members in the I.G.A. than there were in the old International Wheat Agreement. That is a lot of baloney. The I.G.A. and the International Wheat Agreement affect the same number of members. I do not pretend to be an expert but I wish others who are not experts would stop pretending they are.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** May I ask the minister a question, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Pepin:** There is another expert.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Is the minister saying that the Soviet Union, which was a member of the International Wheat Agreement is also a member of the International Grains Arrangement.

**Mr. Pepin:** I think there are at present the same number of countries in the International Grains Arrangement as there were in the International Wheat Agreement. That is what I am saying.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Is the number of exporters the same?

**Mr. Pepin:** The number of countries is the same. One of the countries that does not belong to the I.G.A. is the Soviet Union. Arrangements have been made for the Soviet Union to be admitted to the I.G.A. Negotiations are going on now. I do not see how any new round of negotiations could change the existing situation. Whenever the Soviet Union feels like coming into the I.G.A., it will do so. It is all very easy for the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar to attempt to rewrite history.

**Mr. Gleave:** The minister is rewriting it again.

**Mr. Pepin:** I am not saying that there is anything eternal about the International Grains Arrangement or about any international agreement for that matter. One of these days we shall negotiate some new agreement. There is nothing eternal about international agreements of any kind.

**Mr. Burton:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit another question.