

Probably this course, although it may not be adopted in the immediate future, will play an important part in the ultimate settlement of the problem. I have read that the population of the world is increasing at the rate of 50,000 a day, and that the provision of an adequate supply of food will become one of the gravest of international questions. Undoubtedly in certain areas there will be surpluses which, because of difficulties of distribution, will not be available to those who need them. Probably a solution will be arrived at which will be a compromise between the ideal system I have referred to and some more or less artificial arrangement of the kind which characterises so much current business dealing. I do not know enough about the details to enter into the subject at any length.

It is my conviction that Canadian agriculture deserves well of the Canadian people. I cannot but be impressed with the lopsidedness of much of our economy, past and present. As an instance, let me remind honourable senators that at the moment many types of secondary products manufactured in this country are being sold to consumers at prices well above those prevailing in the United States, the economy of which is most comparable to our own; yet our people do not seem greatly disturbed. On the other hand, meat, wheat, butter, milk and most other basic agricultural products are being sold at prices materially lower than those ruling in the United States; yet, if for one cause or another our prices rise—not above the United States level, but to any point approaching it—one hears a tremendous outcry. In my opinion the attitude of our primary producers, in its calmness, its coolness, and its conservative approach to the problems of the future, is an example to all. It may be that their good common sense has told them that they will suffer if prices become unduly inflated. It must be remembered however that, in common with other citizens, our agricultural producers are faced with increasing costs for everything they buy, so far as I know, except agricultural implements, which, after successive reductions of duty, are now on the free list. In passing it may be remarked that while American implements are imported to Canada there is also a flow of Canadian-produced implements in the opposite direction.

It remains to be seen whether the proposals embodied in the present agreement will have the highly desirable result of opening the markets of the world to the free flow of goods. But it must be said that any measure which promises a degree of security to the agriculturists of this country deserves most serious

consideration of members of this house and of the country as a whole. Security for the future is an objective which occupies the minds of many people today, and it's expression takes many tangible forms. While the present agreement may not achieve all the success which some desire for it, I believe it is incumbent on those who are critical of it to offer some solution other than one which in the past has had dire consequences for agriculture as a whole.

Hon. JOHN T. HAIG: Honourable members, I do not intend to indulge this afternoon in a general speech on the subject of the marketing of farm products. But at no time since the content of wheat agreements has been under discussion have I believed that such agreements were practicable. I hope I have been wrong.

As for this agreement, thirty-five of the thirty-six nations making it have signed; but I understand that to date only one of the exporting nations has approved it. The agreement is between three selling nations and thirty-three buying nations. Australia, Canada and the United States are the three selling nations, and their total export allotment is 500 million bushels of wheat per year. Of this Canada is to furnish 230 million bushels; I cannot say what quantities Australia and the United States are to supply. The other two great wheat-producing nations of the world, Russia and the Argentine, are not parties to the agreement. Wheat is produced almost everywhere, and I think the annual world production is approximately 500,000 million bushels.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: Five thousand million.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Yes, 5,000 million bushels, of which, depending on changing conditions, from 800 million to 1,000 million bushels are traded in a year. This international wheat agreement deals with 500 million bushels. Without considering the question of handling the grain, let us examine the situation. Let us suppose that Canada is to export 230 million bushels of wheat: if the Canadian West suffers a crop failure, with the result that this country cannot supply its quota, what will happen then? If Australia and the United States have already exported the amount they agreed to, they may not, in view of the higher price being paid on the world market, want to furnish the wheat that Canada has failed to supply. What will happen? Nothing! You cannot compel other nations to make up that shortage. That is the situation with respect to the exporting nations.