

*Supply—Trade and Commerce*

all surprised if Poland said, "We will take the 50,000 tons, but you can keep the rest of it." I say that seriously. I hope that critical comments will not be repeated; for the discussions we have on markets for our wheat simply invite our competitors to move into those markets and see if they cannot take the business from us.

As I understand it, the Leader of the Opposition is raising a question of privilege on those words. After hearing him at some length, it would be my opinion that this is not a true question of privilege but merely an extension of an argument which was concluded yesterday. Unless the Leader of the Opposition can indicate some question of true privilege, I do not think this matter should be pursued further.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Chairman, I point out that, in connection with my responsibilities in this house and outside it, I was called out for a few minutes and it was then that this statement was made. I am dealing now with a statement made here—and carried in the press—that as a result of the statements made here and inquiries made of the government to obtain information about this transaction, this Polish wheat deal had been interfered with. That statement by the Minister of Trade and Commerce is irresponsible nonsense. It is simply a repetition of his contempt for parliament. It had nothing whatever to do with the Polish wheat transaction.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**The Chairman:** Order. The Leader of the Opposition will realize that he is now making a statement which on many occasions previously has been found to be unparliamentary, namely that another hon. member of the house is in contempt of parliament. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would wish to withdraw those words.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can close the debate by saying that I am quite satisfied to leave the Polish wheat transaction to the judgment of the farmers of western Canada who are the injured parties.

**Mr. Drew:** Nonsense.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** A good speech.

**Mr. Drew:** Compact and effective.

**The Chairman:** May I now indicate to the committee that we are discussing resolution No. 443. Shall this resolution carry?

**Mr. Thatcher:** Last night the minister gave an explanation as to why this expenditure is necessary. But despite his explanation I am still a little bit dubious about its wisdom. This particular item includes an amount of \$490,000 for the taking of a quinquennial

[The Chairman.]

census. Such a sum is only the beginning, however, because when it is finished, the census will have cost at least \$5 million. I may be wrong but, on the surface at least, it looks as though the figures which the minister will obtain from this new census, are simply going to be duplications of the figures which he could much more easily obtain from the dominion bureau of statistics.

It is quite true that last evening the minister said that such a course was not possible. But I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that in the past the D.B.S. have been amazingly accurate in their forecasts of population. Back in 1951, when the last census was taken, D.B.S., a few weeks before the taking of the census, forecast that the figure would be 13,984,000. When the final figures were obtained, the actual total was 14,009,249. In other words, D.B.S. had an error of less than one-tenth of 1 per cent.

I say therefore that this expenditure which will ultimately amount to upwards of \$5 million or \$6 million is a waste of the taxpayers' money. When it is finished, I do not think the minister will have much information that he could not have obtained from the dominion bureau of statistics. Why do we need this five-year census? Will the minister say that his department has not confidence in the forecasts of the dominion bureau of statistics? Will he say that he does not think he can accept their figures? I think this is an expenditure which should be eliminated and which parliament should not pass.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** May I point out that the department is required by law to take a quinquennial census of the three prairie provinces. We had requests from the other provinces that the quinquennial census be extended. We had numerous requests from businessmen who require the information for the purpose of their businesses. A consultation was had with those responsible for taking the census and it was found that, with very little additional cost over that which was usually incurred for the quinquennial census of the three prairie provinces, we could obtain the information for all of Canada. Short-cuts are being used which substantially reduce the cost. I am advised by my officers that the budget for the quinquennial census now suggested will be very little higher than the budget for the quinquennial census that we are obliged to take in any event.

**Mr. Thatcher:** With all due respect may I suggest to the minister that he should discontinue the quinquennial census on the prairies also. I think that too, while perhaps not a waste of money, is certainly in the category of a luxury expenditure.