

Supply—Trade and Commerce

been devoting as much spare time as I have had available. When I was at a meeting at Regina some time in November, I was asked to give—it was one of those neat little questions—my definition of deficiency payments. Two hundred farmers sat there waiting to see what I would say, but they did agree I had defined the thing pretty well by the time I was finished.

I am interested in that. The government has declared that it is interested in trying to correct this difficulty that has faced agriculture right across this country, not only in the western provinces. The first question my hon. friend asked me, or the comment he made, was about my not having responsibility for the sale of our wheat. I am not attempting to dodge my responsibility in this regard. All I am attempting to point out is that I, alone, am not responsible for the sale of Canadian wheat. The wheat board meets every day during the working week and discusses the sales program. I cannot sit in at those daily meetings and determine whether or not a cargo of grain should go from Vancouver or Montreal or should go to this country or that. In so far as the government has a responsibility, along with the wheat board, for the sale of our products, we are accepting that responsibility.

Mr. Zaplitny: I should like the minister to clear up one particular matter to which he referred this afternoon. I refer to the objections that were raised by his government at the conference that was held with representatives of the United States government concerning the surplus disposal program of the United States. I think the minister set out today what could be regarded in the United States, as well as in other countries, as a very important statement of policy. Certainly, it was at variance with the statement made recently by the Minister of Finance on the same subject. It was for that reason my colleague, the hon. member for Moose Mountain, immediately asked whether or not the Minister of Trade and Commerce agreed with the Minister of Finance on this question.

Today the minister stated, without any reservation, that he has no objection to the United States disposal program, with two exceptions; one, barter deals, and the other the subsidization of flour. Since he is speaking on behalf of the government in this matter he may be sure that the statement will be widely publicized in the United States. Certainly, the Minister of Finance was not taking the same view. As recently as November 6—I will quote the exact words of the Minister of Finance on that question as found on page 814 of *Hansard* for November 6, 1957—in reply to a question put to

him by the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort, the Minister of Finance said this:

That assurance, or at least the particular undertaking given by the United States secretaries, was confined to the barter feature of the program, as I pointed out in my report to the house; but the Canadian government has made no attempt to disguise the fact that with regard to all features of the surplus disposal program of the United States administration, it regards that program as being very damaging to Canada's interests in reference to the marketing of wheat; and on any occasion we propose to put forward that strong point of view of the Canadian government.

Now, when you read that statement alongside of what the minister stated today I am afraid it is going to give rise to some serious misunderstanding. Obviously on November 6 the Minister of Finance was speaking for the government. He was not expressing his own opinion only because he set forth the point of view of the Canadian government that the whole disposal program of the United States was very damaging to the disposal of Canadian wheat. The Minister of Trade and Commerce informed not only the house but the world that he has no objection to the United States disposal program, with the two exceptions that he specified, barter deals and subsidization. This leaves a wide field between the views of the Minister of Finance, speaking for the government on November 6, and the Minister of Trade and Commerce, speaking again for the government, on this date. Unless that matter is cleared up, I am afraid the statement of the minister today, taken alongside of the statement of the Minister of Finance is going to create a great deal of confusion in the minds of the United States government and of the people in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Mr. Churchill: I thank the hon. member for drawing my attention to that statement. When the Minister of Finance was making that statement I think he was considering the effect of the United States surplus disposal program on what you might call the normal commercial markets. I think it would be helpful if I put on the record the statement I made at the conference at Geneva where I said this:

I wish now, Mr. Chairman, to refer to a particular problem of concern, not only to Canada, but also to many other countries. It arises from the United States program of surplus disposal, particularly of wheat and other grains. This program has grown enormously in recent years, with increasingly adverse effects upon Canada. The Canadian government has always made clear that it does not object to genuine aid programs. Indeed, within the limits of our country's own capabilities, Canada has done its share and I hope will continue to do so. Our concern is rather with programs for dumping surpluses abroad in such a way as to destroy normal markets.

Our main objection is that, in one way or another, by the payment of subsidies, by barter,