

Wheat Export Prices

Mr. Pepin: Yes, he was.

Mr. Gundlock: Was the Prime Minister with him? The answer is no. I remember an occasion when I spoke in this house when the Prime Minister and the minister responsible for this problem were both in Washington. They conferred with the President of the United States. In the first instance they asked him, "are we friends and allies or are we enemies?" I hope both the ministers realized this. The President of the United States said, "Of course, we are friends. What do you have in mind?" But the matter of wheat was never brought up. It seems to me this is a question of management. They went on from there, reminding the United States that we are their best customer and their best supplier. In other words, they want our iron ore, our oil, our gas, our water, and even our air space as well as refuelling stations. Is that not a bargaining position? What did our government do when they were in that bargaining position? They never mentioned one of those points. Let the minister tell us, I would be glad to hear him.

• (8:10 p.m.)

Mr. Pepin: The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) spoke to Mr. Nixon on that subject.

Mr. Gundlock: You just said the Prime Minister was not at that meeting.

Mr. Pepin: I was in Washington three times last month and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) was there on a couple of occasions.

Mr. Gundlock: That is beside the point. I was talking about the last wheat agreement. The minister says he was there three times. He only needed to be there once.

Mr. Pepin: You asked a question, I answered it.

Mr. Gundlock: That was not the question. You said you were there three times. I asked if the Minister of Agriculture was there and if the Prime Minister was there. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) said no.

Mr. Pepin: I said yes.

Mr. Gundlock: You said you were there three times. Probably at one of the three meetings the three of you were there but, I ask, who were your advisers on the wheat agreement?

Mr. Pepin: In Washington? The Canadian Wheat Board, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of Agriculture. They were all represented there.

Mr. Gundlock: That is exactly what I thought. The Wheat Board has no authority to deal with a government. Only the government can deal with another government. I say this loud and clear to the Minister of Agriculture and to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, that the heads of the wheat boards are very selfish people who are interested only in storage, not in handling and selling. I refer particularly to the Saskatchewan farm union, which almost disgraced this whole country at their meeting with the Prime Minister. I am very happy that, in my constituency, he was treated with courtesy and dignity as a Prime Minister should be. He understood that there was a problem out there, but his ministers and his advisers did not.

I should like to ask one more question. How much money has the government supplied to the grain council as of June 1?

Mr. Pepin: The Department of Agriculture is providing \$50,000 and my department is providing \$50,000 this year.

Mr. Gundlock: My information is that it is \$2,500, not even enough to hire a secretary.

Mr. Olson: You need some better information.

Mr. Gundlock: I am not so sure. I will call Paul Martin. He has a good bureau of statistics. This is the information I have as of June 1. It is not even enough money to hire a secretary. How do they expect that council to work? Who are the members of that council? This reminds me of a remark a friend of mine, formerly a member of the house, once made, that you might just as well put a bunch of weasels in charge of a hen house. The reference was the way this government managed our business.

They tell us to sit here in the house while they go across the country telling the farmers not to raise wheat. This takes me back ten years. I remember when the Liberals were on our side and we were on their side of the house. At that time they said exactly the same thing. I remember when the minister of agriculture of that time said, "Don't listen to the opposition; grow wheat and we will sell it". What happened? We sold it, and they can do the same thing.