

Wheat

arrangements the farmers in the United States continue to receive a guaranteed parity price. Is the U. S. going to sell the 770 million bushels or, as the minister himself said, almost a billion bushels surplus which they have under subsidy? If so, then the Canadian farmer will be anxious, and will want to know what is going to happen to him if the Americans start selling their wheat in the British market, at a subsidized price. If so, what is going to happen to our surplus of 550 million? The minister has assured us today that everything is all right and perhaps he can then make a statement that the wheat farmers are going to be able to make delivery of say ten bushels per acre by next July. That would give the farmers and the growers of this country some assurance. If he knows that, he should tell them.

If he does not know, then let us be realistic about the matter and tell them that with the surplus that exists today we cannot see any visible markets in the world that can take it. That would do a great deal to allay the fears that exist in the minds of the growers. A statement should be now made setting out exactly what the situation is with regard to the ability of the importing nations of the world to take our wheat.

I asked for this earlier in the session but got the usual brush-off. We are naturally concerned about the British market which has been the traditional market on which Canada has relied for years. If the United States with her wealth, this giant with whom we share this continent, steps in with government subsidies, what can stop them? What is there to stop them from putting the price below the Canadian cost of production and thus putting us completely out of the export situation? We would be left with surpluses which pile up and pile up and the future would be dark indeed.

I think the British market is too vital to the Canadian people to have it stolen. It would be a most unfortunate thing if through a government price system in the United States they were able to step into this market and put Canada out, so far as our wheat is concerned.

Mr. W. A. Tucker (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say just a few words in this regard but I do not want anything I say to be taken as criticism of the wheat board, in which I have great confidence, as I think it has saved our growers many millions of dollars over the past two or three years in spite of what has been said about it. Of course nothing that I shall say can be taken as criticism in any way of the minister because I think there is complete confidence all over western

[Mr. Castleden.]

Canada that he will do everything he possibly can to see to it, in co-operation with the wheat board, that our grain is marketed to the best possible advantage.

When an agency of the United States government has accumulated over 750 million bushels of wheat and is contemplating releasing all or part of it on the present market with the present supply of wheat in existence, it becomes more than a matter that should be handled solely by an agency of this government such as the wheat board. I am quite satisfied that the wheat board has done a wonderful job; I am quite satisfied that it will do all that possibly can be done; but when it is faced with a situation like this where an agency of a powerful government like the United States is proposing to liquidate grain which has accumulated over a period of years, it is being faced with a most difficult situation.

If there is any possibility of that happening, then I think certain things should be stated in this parliament as an indication of backing up the wheat board and the minister. That is why I welcome this opportunity to speak this afternoon.

When we signed the North Atlantic treaty, one of the things agreed upon very definitely with the United States government was that we would co-operate in the difficult days then facing us, in economic as well as military matters.

Mr. Coldwell: Article 2.

Mr. Tucker: This North Atlantic treaty is a treaty between governments and a treaty which binds governments. I am sure that if the attention of the United States government was brought to this matter it would bring it to the attention of their Commodity Credit Corporation if it was felt that action was contemplated which might react to the great disadvantage of a partner to that treaty. The preamble to the North Atlantic treaty states:

They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.

Any action that may be taken by the Commodity Credit Corporation which might in any way break the prices of a basic commodity like wheat might have a bad effect upon the stability and well-being of the North Atlantic area. The effects of such action would not be restricted to wheat; they would widen out and affect other commodities and ultimately might lead to difficulties which while not quite as bad as we experienced in the early thirties might start a trend in that direction. This is a matter for governmental action and consideration.