

Wheat—Communiqué Following Meeting

people in his department who can tell him what the attitude of the other producing nations is.

With the European Economic Community doing as it did last year, when it spent \$600 million to support its wheat farmers and dispose of the 770 million bushels they produced, it is scarcely likely that it would change its mind as a nod from Canada. If the Economic Community was ready to spend that kind of money last year then certainly it is prepared to stay in the wheat market. The other exporters have stated their position, as mentioned by the minister in his statement, and we in Canada will bear the brunt of the major reduction which is being undertaken in this country. The minister knows very well that if he were to go to Saskatchewan at present he would find that province in a state of economic shock resulting from the slow-down in earnings and income.

No invitation was issued to the U.S.S.R. which, next to China, is certainly the major wheat producing nation in the world. The importers were not present, and it would scarcely be likely that the small group that was called together could agree on a policy which would direct the wheat production of the world. What we are really talking about here is the total production in the world. It is indeed too optimistic to expect that Canada as one nation can affect the total wheat production for the benefit of the farmers on the prairies, and will prove to be a risky venture for Canada.

By way of offering some advice to the minister, I point out that what we should strive to do is to reconvene a meeting of those countries responsible for the International Grains Arrangement and get back to a real international wheat agreement in which all countries participate and which will bring some order into the market. Partial approaches such as are being taken within Canada and by calling together a very few of the nations involved to seek agreement to a major reduction are doomed to failure from the start.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I do not like to be unkind. I must say, however, that I was not at all pleased a moment ago to think that I had to comment on the minister's statement when I had received the English version only upon entering the House and when the French version has just now been given to me. I understand that, on occasion, an oversight may occur, and that

[Mr. Gleave.]

is excusable. But when a party spokesman must comment on a minister's statement, I believe he should be given a copy of the settlement at least a few minutes before he rises to speak.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, it would appear that the same question keeps cropping up on the agenda and that the problems of the farmers have become the nightmares of governments. It is a fact that the dairy industry is a nightmare for the government. Governments are also faced with a nightmare when it comes to wheat production. If such nightmares resulted from inefficiency, unemployment or the laziness of the farmers, it could be said that there is a very serious problem created by their apathy. However, since it is a problem of distributing the fruit of the labour of farmers of eastern or western Canada, it must be recognized that there is a surplus of production over consumption. Efforts are made to try to find some way to balance production and demand so as to achieve the proper ratio between exports and imports.

It has been often reported in newspapers that in several countries in the world, many people are hungry and subject to nightmares precisely because they are unable to till the land to make it produce the food they need.

We should therefore endeavor to diversify our production so as not to be stuck with too great a surplus. However, as we all live on the same planet, we should try to produce according to the needs of human beings. Indeed, we must always tend to produce to meet the needs, and not to help dealers make more and more money.

It is only fair to make a profit when reselling any merchandise, but the main objective of trade within a well organized community which is concerned about establishing a just society is to ensure that each and everyone has enough to meet his essential needs. It matters little whether others have more, but it is imperative that all be guaranteed the basic necessities.

Mr. Speaker, such are the observations I wanted to make at this stage. Since the Standing Committee on Agriculture happens to be studying a problem related to grains, I hope that as their work progresses they will realize that, even in Canada, it would be possible in a good many regions to use more products from eastern Canada, which would enable us to absorb part of the wheat production through trade.