

Government Organization

will enjoy a better life in town. No sir! Today they are leaving for the city but within five or six years, willy nilly they will come back to the land as it happened in the 30's. Nobody seems to realize this. Apparently, the officials are taking it easy and never go and see for themselves in those areas.

May I suggest to the minister to do as they do in China and send his officials, in turn, on some farm for a while to learn the ropes. He will see how much that experience will teach them. Let him send some to our logging camps for a whole winter; let them work like the others. You will see that when they come back to the office they will pull up their sleeves and say: No more Pepsi; let's get to work.

Mr. Chairman, those are the main remarks I wanted to make for the benefit of the minister. I am sure that at long last we have a minister from the East heading the Department of Agriculture. We are no longer to be pitied. Indeed, it is 61 years since we have had a French Canadian from the East as Minister of Agriculture. Now, we have one and we will go to him for help and urge him on too. I am very happy because he is a good worker—no mental reservation here—and if we go up to him with plans, if he is given a job to do, he will apply himself to make a success of them. If the bureaucrats refuse to go along, I know he will take the whip to them, and get them back on the job.

[*English*]

Mr. Southam: Mr. Chairman, this afternoon we have been discussing item 57 on the order paper, committee of the whole on Bill C-173, an act respecting the organization of the government of Canada and matters relating or incidental thereto. I have been waiting for a considerable time to place my views on the record about the serious situation in western Canada today, the causes of it and how it affects the marketing of our wheat. Although land is urgently wanted everywhere, in western Canada we have plenty of land for farming. You might say we have "wanted land" in plenty. That is a strange paradox but nevertheless is true. I have done some research to try and find the cause of this situation in order to place the facts on record. At the risk of repeating, I would remind this house of the seriousness of the situation which exists.

[**Mr. Gauthier.**]

• (5:10 p.m.)

Canadian wheat producers wonder if this government has any conception of how serious the situation is, or how to go about solving the problem of marketing Canada's huge stocks of grain. The facts of the matter, as I understand them, are that the tremendous upheaval in the international wheat market produced by events of the past two years has changed things to the point where only a radical change in Canada's whole approach to wheat pricing and marketing will be adequate to meet the new circumstances.

In the period between the death of the old international wheat agreement on July 31, 1967 and the coming into force of the new international grain arrangement on July 1 of last year there was, for the first time in years, a free world market in wheat. This free market not only opened the door to dumping, price-cutting and cut-throat competition, but it disrupted the established pattern of exporting and importing and spurred importing nations to take fresh stock of their position. The result was that when the new international agreement came into force last summer, the old trading pattern to which it was to apply had been drastically altered. In addition, thanks to circumstances with which I intend to deal shortly, the new international arrangement was an imperfect instrument even in the old context.

The new world wheat picture includes traditional Canadian markets that are either gone or greatly diminished and others that are open to stiff competition from newcomers. Technological advances and changes in national tastes have completely altered the buying pattern of many importing nations. They no longer seek the same quantities or grades of wheat as they did two years ago.

Most importing nations have made great strides in developing their own agricultural industry to supply more of their grain needs. India has already stated she intends to be self-sufficient so far as wheat is concerned in three years. Many European countries have drastically altered their requirements. Some exporting nations have already adopted more flexible methods of marketing and pricing to meet the demands of the changed world market. Canada, so far, has stood firm on the basis of her high quality wheat and, as far as the importers are concerned, on the high minimums set under the new international arrangement. The result has been lost sales, exports reduced to a trickle and a bleak outlook for the immediate future.