

not a decision made by the Canadian Wheat Board. Also, the two-price system was not a decision of the Canadian Wheat Board. With high world prices, we really have a three-price system which is unacceptable at the present time. Even though the vote was conducted and the indication at that time was given to the minister by the farmers in western Canada, there are ways to get these reports through a plebiscite. As I mentioned before, the secrecy which surrounds the operations of the Wheat Board should come into question. Whether or not members in this House of Commons realize it, it is certainly realized by the farmers of western Canada.

This kind of debate opens up certain avenues which we have not explored before. It airs some of the frustrations, aspirations and wants of a good many members of this House of Commons, whether or not they are in favour of giving additional money to the farmers. In closing, I should like to say I firmly believe this is a good motion. It is a good motion at this time because it deals with the amount of money involved in so far as the sale of our grain is concerned. I believe more money should be given to the farmers. This is really what we are asking.

In the motion we are asking the House of Commons to bring the return to prairie farmers more in line with grain prices on world markets at this time. We have the means to do this. I therefore hope the House of Commons will agree to the motion presented by the hon. member for Crowfoot.

**Mr. Keith Taylor (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak tonight in support of the motion presented by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and to deal with this issue which affects so vitally all those who live in western Canada. I was quite surprised to hear the speeches of hon. members on the opposite side of the House and those to my left. I have never heard so much praise as I heard from the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) for the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, and so little evidence presented to support that praise. Obviously, the hon. member for St. Boniface has not been tuned in on the same wavelength as members on this side of the House.

I was also surprised at the wiggling and waffling we have heard from members to my left. Again they are up to the old trick of speaking very fervently one way and in the final analysis voting the opposite way. I do not know why they are bound and determined to say that this motion is a condemnation of the Wheat Board. There is nothing whatsoever in the motion to indicate that this is the case, and certainly no member on this side of the House has supported that contention. The other ridiculous argument they have used to justify the way they intend to vote in saying that if the government should be defeated on this motion, there would be no money paid to our farmers in any event. Surely the members to my left know it is the Wheat Board that is called upon to make this payment, and not the government. The defeat of the government on this issue would not in any way affect the possibility of the Wheat Board making a much needed payment to the farmers.

This motion indicates that the interest of the farmers of western Canada is best served by providing them with the most advantageous return for the crops they have pro-

### *Wheat Sales*

duced. One thing that has been overlooked in this debate is the advantage which accrues to the farmers of western Canada by using one of our greatest inland ports, namely, the port of Churchill. It is the port of Churchill with which I want to deal very briefly this evening.

The port of Churchill long has been a vital part of the commerce not just in the north but in the whole prairie region. Until the first part of this century, prairie grain could be exported only by the way of ports on the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River and the Atlantic seaboard. Prairie farmers looked for a more reasonable route and they have found it in the port of Churchill. Pressure from the farmers of western Canada resulted in the port commencing operations in 1931. It has been utilized ever since. I say "utilized", although it has not been utilized in the way it could be and should be. At present, according to the National Harbours Board figures, there is a wharf some 2,800 feet in length which provides berths for four large grain ships. The existing berths are dredged to a depth of about 32 feet, with a turning basin of approximately 800 feet in width. There is some five million bushels of storage capacity, along with the trackage, which allows for a considerable amount of additional trackage and storage.

● (2030)

As you know, the great bulk of the wheat grown in Canada is grown on the Prairies. During the crop year 1971-72, according to the Wheat Board's annual report for that period almost 210 million bushels of wheat and wheat flour were exported to Europe. To bring this figure into perspective one must consider the Wheat Board's figures with regard to the volume of wheat generally exported by way of the various ports. Almost 204 million bushels were exported by way of the St. Lawrence ports. More than 34 million bushels went by way of the Atlantic ports, and 5.7 million bushels by way of the Lakes' ports. This means that the port of Churchill is available for the shipment of a tremendous quantity of wheat should the government and the Wheat Board decide to make full use of it.

Due to ice conditions in the last year which were unusual, and the restrictive insurance coverage, the shipping season for the port of Churchill over the past five years has averaged about 88 days annually. Last year something over 25 million bushels of prairie grain was shipped out of the port, over 20 million bushels of which, according to the Canadian Wheat Board, was wheat.

I have cited on earlier occasions a report for the 1971-72 crop year issued by the office of the Minister of Agriculture. In that report there is a comparison of the estimated average forwarding cost of prairie wheat bound for Antwerp by way of the various ports. The cost cited in that report for using maritime ports was over 59 cents per bushel. The cost of shipping by way of Thunder Bay was about 44½ cents a bushel. Shipping by way of the St. Lawrence ports cost something over 46 cents a bushel. The cost of shipping by way of the port of Churchill by comparison was substantially less than any of these figures, namely, 36.652 cents per bushel, to be exact.

Why, then, does the government choose to utilize the St. Lawrence ports ten times more than the port of Churchill? That makes an interesting question, especially when, with regard to wheat exports to Europe at least, it is almost a