

Grain

Mr. Pepin: Does the hon. member disagree with that statement?

Mr. Woolliams: I disagree with the government's entire policy. Quite frankly, it has no policy.

Mr. Pepin: The hon. member's former leader, when he was prime minister, said in the House of Commons as reported at page 880 of *Hansard* for February 15, 1962:

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to comment on a vote that took place yesterday but the hon. gentleman knows very well that throughout the years it has never been considered proper to reveal the particulars of agreements or transactions entered into by the wheat board. To do so would be to depart from the regular principle and would be of benefit only to those who are competitors.

If I were not so pleased to be on the government side of the house I might enjoy the experience of being on the other side for a few days to enjoy the game of telling the government, as hon. members over there do, that we should provide more subsidies, sell more of this, and do this and that without having to take the responsibility of what would happen if those suggestions were implemented.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pepin: I came well prepared, Mr. Speaker, and I can quote chapter and verse to hon. members on the other side. Hon. members said that the Wheat Board ought to give advance quotas for damp grain; that damp grain ought to be given priority in box car movements. They emphasized at the same time that we should not lose a single sale, and so on. I do not see why hon. members are complaining because their suggestions were carried out. Hon. members ought now to take their share of the responsibility for what has happened. We have taken chances—

Mr. Gundlock: May I ask the minister a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The minister has the option to refuse.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I am just warming up. The hon. member for Mackenzie accuses us of not having made one particular sale. As I said before, it is not the practice of the house to talk about specific sales, as the former leader of the Conservative party said. He stressed the value of that tradition. I hasten to add, however, that shipments of Canadian wheat to Japan this year are considerably above last year's level, being at 17.1 million

[Mr. Woolliams.]

bushels as compared to 12.5 million bushels in the August to December period last year.

Mr. Woolliams: Peanuts.

Mr. Pepin: I do not see why we should be accused of having missed one sale when 5 million more bushels this year than in the corresponding period last year have been sold. I don't want to break an old tradition but I might indicate to the hon. member for Mackenzie that the sale he assumed was lost has not been lost.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pepin: Press reports at times can be wrong and this is one occasion. I am not saying that the sale will not be lost. I am saying that it has not been lost and that the Wheat Board will see to it that a maximum effort is made so that it won't be lost.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, since apparently members have only 20 minutes in which to speak, I wish to state that the debate we are having is partly on the functions of the minister. I do not want to quote Dawson and other learned authorities because if I did so I would be accused of going back to my former profession. But on reflection I ask, is it the function of ministers to replace the proper authorities? Is it my job to run the wheat marketing system in Canada, to tell the Wheat Board what to do, to command or, using the word used by the hon. member for Mackenzie, to instruct? Is it my job to instruct the members of the Wheat Board? Is it necessary for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) to instruct the Board of Grain Commissioners? I don't believe that because if it is our job to instruct then obviously we don't need these boards.

Mr. Horner: We will tell you your job.

Mr. Pepin: I am just trying to reason with the opposition members and this is sometimes difficult.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pepin: It is not the function of the minister, the way I look at it, to run Crown agencies. That is the way that traditionally these things have been looked at. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) is familiar with these theories. I am quite sure that when he was premier of Nova Scotia he did not actually tell everybody in the provincial