

*Supply—Finance*

same number of acres can deliver on a six bushel quota, let me explain it. Just imagine the pressure from his creditors, just imagine the pressure from his wife. There is nothing so depressing as curtain lectures. I hope the minister is beginning to see that the farmers expect from him a day by day interest in these quotas and once again I put it to the minister that the wheat board cannot handle this matter alone. Can the wheat board call the President of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool or the presidents of the line elevator companies and say, your boys have not got their orders in for cars. The minister should know that the grain companies have an interest in keeping their granaries filled. He should know that somebody who has power has to call them on the telephone and say, look, on that line your orders are down; you are responsible, not the wheat board.

Another time you look at the situation and find that the railways have not been doing their job. Can the wheat board call up the heads of the C.P.R. or the C.N.R. and point out what is going on? Can the wheat board say, If action is not forthcoming we will be prepared to take action? The wheat board has no power. To be completely fair about it, the wheat board sometimes slips up in allocating shipping orders. I kept a chart in my office showing the 1,900 shipping points in the west. I knew every day where there was discrimination and if it developed too much along one line there was action taken. Sixty per cent of my time as minister was spent working with the Canadian Wheat Board. In my time we reduced the number of criticisms of the Canadian Wheat Board in the form of phone calls and mail from hundreds to a trickle.

Now you go through western Canada and hear the criticism of the wheat board that has developed and you ask these farmers who is the best friend of the wheat board. If the minister does not take the blame the only person left to take the blame is the wheat board. The best feature about the wheat board system is the man who steps in the breach and takes all the blame. I took the blame as minister on many occasions for the Canadian Wheat Board and kept the pressure off them. I put the blame right on you, the minister, because you have not defended the wheat board on these matters of life and death to these farmers in their and their families' daily living.

I could speak for an hour on where the failures have occurred but this is enough as a

[Mr. Hamilton.]

domestic example. I have given some examples where the minister has to enter the picture, defend the wheat board, get action from the railways, get action from the grain companies, and make sure the grain is moving in the interests of the farmers.

Let us take another altogether different type of duty of the minister which is not in the act. The minister knows that we are a party to the International Wheat Agreement and he knows that every three years the agreement comes up for renewal. He knows that the principle is that when the price during the last part of the agreement has been near the top level or maximum you expect to negotiate the next minimum and maximum slightly higher to allow the law of supply and demand to work. Here we have a situation where the International Wheat Agreement ran out in 1964. It has been renewed on a one year basis three times since. Not one organized move has been made, so far as anyone in western Canada knows, by the Canadian government through the minister to gather information on the International Wheat Agreement and seek a new range of prices for the next three years.

We got the price up 12½ cents in U.S. funds both on the floor and on the ceiling after weeks of hard fighting. Finally we forced the United States authorities to agree. We asked for 25 cents and by sheer persistence we got 12½. When world demand was strong in the last three years, the prices should have been raised. In this respect the minister is responsible for taking the lead. This is one of the things not laid down in the act. Surely it is the responsibility of the minister to work in a way to help the nation.

In 1957 when the government changed the then prime minister went to Washington to meet with President Eisenhower. One of the main subjects of discussion was the effect of public law 480 of the United States government with respect to the sale of our wheat in commercial markets. President Eisenhower was appalled at what he thought his country was doing to an ally. At that time an agreement was made between the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada to the effect that there would be no more cutting of each other country's throat in commercial markets of the world. In that respect a gentlemen's agreement was reached.

Pursuant to that gentleman's agreement quarterly meetings are held between United States officials and Canadian officials to clear