

Wheat Export Prices

productive." That is not what the farmers heard in the past.

I wish to read briefly from a speech the Prime Minister made in Winnipeg on June 2, 1968, in the midst of an election campaign. It is in the form of a written text and I therefore assume that the Prime Minister seriously meant what he said, and that his words were not sheer campaign rhetoric to secure the votes of western farmers. I am assuming that the Prime Minister was announcing a carefully thought out program of which the farmers should take cognizance and upon which they should act. The part of the speech I shall refer to is headed, "Canada's Export Objective". The Prime Minister said this:

The Canadian government is confident of Canada's capacity to grow and sell the wheat that the world demands. Both the government and the Canadian Wheat Board are determined to maintain and improve Canada's share of the world wheat market. The objective is to secure 25 per cent or better of world wheat trade or, in quantitative terms, 1.3 billion bushels of wheat exports in the next three years.

I pause there, Mr. Speaker. That was a pretty direct promise to the farmers of western Canada. The government was prepared to improve Canada's share of the market and to secure 25 per cent or better of the world's wheat trade. The Prime Minister said the government was prepared to dispose of 1.3 billion bushels in the next three years. That is about 433 million bushels a year.

When our farmers heard the Prime Minister say that, they were encouraged because our share of the world's wheat market had been declining steadily. From 1948 to 1952 Canada managed to retain 21.3 per cent of the total world wheat market. In the last crop year, however—in the 1967-68 crop year—our share of the world's wheat trade dropped to 11.6 per cent, about half the previous figure. When export figures for this year become available I suspect we will find that our share of the market has declined even more.

Mr. Pepin: For what year did the hon. member quote the figure of 11.6 per cent?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): That was for the 1967-68 crop year. I continue reading from the Prime Minister's speech:

To attain this level of wheat exports, the government is prepared to give all necessary support to the selling operations of the Canadian Wheat Board. In furtherance of these objectives, the government will:

(a) Continue to subscribe to and fully support the International Grains Arrangement.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

(b) Review and amend credit facilities available to improve the competitive position of Canadian wheat on world markets.

(c) Continue a high level of wheat and flour in Canada's Food Aid Program. The government has announced a goal for total aid of one per cent of the gross national product. Wheat and flour will continue to represent an important share of this increasing expenditure.

I draw attention to subparagraph (b), which says that the government will "...review...the competitive position of Canadian wheat on world markets". I hope the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) will tell us, when he speaks, what the government has done to improve our competitive position.

Mr. Pepin: I will.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The minister says he will. I hope he will tell us what the results of government actions have been.

Mr. Pepin: The hon. member should know that.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I will know if the minister tells us what he has done, and if he will show us the results. I say to the minister that on the basis of the results his tenure of office has been a total failure.

I draw attention to subparagraph (c), which says that the government will "continue a high level of wheat and flour in Canada's food aid program". Our goal for total foreign aid is 1 per cent of our gross national product. My deskmate, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), on Friday, I think it was, put some figures on the record which had just been published by O.E.C.D. and the last year for which figures were available showed Canada's contribution to foreign aid was .49 of one per cent, less than one-half of one per cent of our gross national product.

For years the government have been telling us they were going to reach this goal of one per cent. They are not halfway there yet. I wonder what the minister is doing about including more wheat, cereal grains and flour in the foreign aid program. It certainly does not show up in the figures published by the O.E.C.D. As a matter of fact in recent years the government have not even been spending the full appropriation voted by parliament for foreign aid. That is how little has been done about trying to get our surplus food and other supplies into our foreign aid program.