

Supply—Trade and Commerce

for Melville mentioned this afternoon. There again the farmer should not be called upon to carry the entire burden.

Now that you have drawn my attention to it, may I comment on certain remarks made in the house by the hon. member for Assiniboia who unfortunately is absent. He referred to a press report in which I was reported to have said that the western farmer did not need a subsidy. I never did say anything like that at all. What I did say on that occasion was that it was to the credit of the western agriculturist that over all these years he has managed without being subsidized, and I said that fact was not understood by a great many people in this country. Well, I was reported in the other way and the matter was played up in a rather cheap political fashion.

Mr. Johnson (Kindersley): Does the minister mean that in all those years the farmers have in fact managed without a subsidy? Their financial position is a very critical one and is a reflection of their experience in previous years.

Mr. Churchill: The hon. member is trying to twist it again. I was paying a tribute to the individual initiative and citizenship of the western farmer. I was trying to point out that in other parts of Canada that was not fully appreciated. I think that agriculture requires assistance at the present time. The government has stated that fact time and time again and the introduction of the cash advance legislation this fall was an indication of our concern over the plight of the western farmer. Strangely enough that passed without notice by some of my hon. friends who were criticizing our policy the other day and today.

May I say a word or two now with regard to trade with the United States and then mention the trade mission now in the United Kingdom and the relationship between the two. We have been talking about diversion of purchases from the United States to the United Kingdom. It is not anti-Americanism and is not so designed. The trade between our two countries will always continue to be very large. We cannot move Canada off this continent, nor do we wish to set up any barrier against our friendly neighbours. But there is no need for us to have our entire trade with the United States, and that is the point we are rapidly reaching. With 73 per cent of our imports coming from one country there is an imbalance and we think that imbalance can be corrected in a natural way and without government interference.

We thought the natural way would be to encourage greater imports from the United Kingdom. It is a two-way street. Canada

will benefit just as the United Kingdom will, and to my knowledge no one who lives in western Canada has raised any serious objection to the Canadian trade mission which has gone to the United Kingdom because we who live in that part of the country know so well that the more dollars that are earned by the United Kingdom the more opportunity there is for us to maintain our best market for Canadian wheat. The export of 100 million bushels a year over the years is the most stabilizing factor in our wheat economy, and there is the market, the United Kingdom. If dollars are available to the United Kingdom—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Rea): Order. I am sorry to have to tell the Minister of Trade and Commerce that his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Go ahead.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Rea): Is it the wish of the committee that the minister continue?

Mr. Tucker: I will ask the minister a question and then he can go on for another 30 minutes. Before he concludes I hope he will say a word on how much money has been paid out under the cash advance policy. I do not want to interfere with what he is saying now but I would ask him to do that before he concludes.

Mr. Churchill: I do not have the figures with me for that but I think that can be answered when we come to the special item in the estimates with regard to the grain commissioners. I was saying that as the United Kingdom earns dollars there is a greater chance for the sale of Canadian surplus products in the United Kingdom. We want to regain our market there for lumber, fish, apples and other things which we used to sell to the United Kingdom in days gone by. The difficulty with the imbalance of our trade with the United States is simply that the United States does not require those very products in the way that the United Kingdom does because they grow their own. For so many years the United Kingdom was our best customer for wheat, lumber, apples and so on.

The mission to the United Kingdom has as its purpose the correction of this imbalance in our trade. There have been some misconceptions with regard to the mission. Some people think they are over there to interfere in some way with Canadian industry. That is not so. The members of the mission are sound and serious businessmen who are concerned with the future of Canada. The mission is interested in attempting to