

Wheat Export Prices

from the government as to whether they will accept any of these proposals.

If the government is not going to accept the proposals what are they going to do on their own initiative? After the experience of the Prime Minister last week, I hope the government will now wake up and bring about some positive action, if not on what the opposition parties have mentioned then on the proposals of the people engaged in the farm industry, or their own, if they have any. We have waited, and we do not want to wait much longer.

Mr. Pepin: May I be allowed to say, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the things the member mentioned are already being done. Potash cars are being used and cars are being rented from the United States. Also, with respect to the Wheat Board using money available for temporary wheat storage. I would not like to leave the impression that what the hon. member suggests is not already, in part at least, being done.

• (5:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. The minister has already taken part in the debate.

[*English*]

Mr. D. R. Gundlock (Lethbridge): I should like to say at once, Mr. Speaker, that I notice the absence of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) from this most important debate. There may be some slight excuse for the Prime Minister because he has been looking into this matter personally. The Minister of Agriculture cannot be excused. I have before me an extract from Throop's Scrapbook at page 112. The heading is Political Humour. Mr. R. B. Hanson having interrupted Mr. C. G. Power, Mr. Power is reported to have said:

The honourable member had better not talk so much or they will make him a minister and keep him quieter.

That is what I think about the Minister of Agriculture. He should be here. This is an agricultural matter. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) should be complimented in one sense, and I shall have more to say about that later. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Osler) dealt particularly with subsidies as a western member. What he said was new to me and I come from a little farther west than he does. I compliment the Prime Minister on his visit

because he conceded there was a problem in western Canada relating directly to the wheat situation. This is what we are talking about.

Mr. Barnett: It took him a long time to find out.

Mr. Gundlock: Yes, as my hon. friend says, it took him a long time to find out. It certainly did, but at least he came to that opinion. He found out there was a problem. During his visit he said there would be no handouts. I take it that that means subsidies. That is what my hon. friend from Winnipeg South Centre said.

I should like to refer to the 1968-69 estimates in respect of subsidies paid by the Canadian government. Quoting the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) page 3474 of *Hansard*, the 1968-69 subsidies amount to \$415 million. Running down the page one can see that the quality premium on high grade hogs and lamb carcasses amounted to \$110 million. Freight assistance on western feed grain totalled \$21 million. The payment under the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act was \$15 million. Payments in connection with the movement of coal were \$35 million. The carrying cost of temporary wheat reserves totalled \$29 million. Subventions in respect of eastern coal were \$2 million. Payments to the railway companies under the Maritime Freight Rates Act were \$14 million. Payments to the railways under the provisions of the National Transportation Act were \$127 million. Steamship subventions for coastal services amounted to \$12 million. The trading loss on the agricultural products account and the agricultural stabilization account were \$113 million. Other subsidies amounted to \$11 million. The only one I can see here which would appear to relate directly to what we are talking about, western wheat, is the freight subsidy on western feed grain. In reality, this subsidy helps other parts of the country as well.

My arithmetic, as well as my English, are not too good, but according to my arithmetic the government is paying \$386 million in subsidies today. So I would ask the hon member, through you, Mr. Speaker, what is all the talk about helping the western grain farmers by way of subsidies. I have not even mentioned the \$80 million given away to the automobile industry. I do not know whether it is permissible to mention that in this debate, but it might be. I complimented the Prime Minister for having found a problem in the west. Some people on his side of the house do not agree.