

Supply—Trade and Commerce

opposition was prime minister of this country and the hon. member for Qu'Appelle was minister of agriculture.

The hon. member across the way indicated that he was never against wheat sales to China, yet he ran in more than one election campaign as a candidate for a party that was against those sales.

Mr. Jorgenson: No principle.

Mr. Nasserden: I have heard his colleagues in the party to which he once belonged speaking on platforms across the prairies, particularly in the province of Saskatchewan, and reiterating time and time again the shortcomings of the former Conservative prime minister and minister of agriculture because they had entered into these sales. I think it can be said that the hon. member himself at times questioned the advisability of making sales on a credit basis; he will not deny that.

Mr. Olson: The hon. member for Medicine Hat dissociated himself from that statement the day after it was made.

Mr. Nasserden: At least he admits it was made.

I now turn to the question before the committee today. The announcement made by the minister was one that the producers in western Canada will appreciate. The people in western Canada would have appreciated it a lot more were it not for the fact that they know there will soon be a general election in the province of Saskatchewan. The Liberal candidates who were travelling up and down the province last week were not able to talk about provincial politics at all. The question being fired at them was: What are you doing to get the government at Ottawa to do something about the price of wheat and the falling grain sales which are taken place in this country?

This is why we have had the announcement today from the government. There is nothing in it which bears any relationship to the promises which were made during the last election campaign as hon. gentleman opposite went across the country declaring they would give the grain producers \$2 wheat. Where is that guarantee of \$2 wheat? How was this subsidy to the grain producers of western Canada arrived at? Any way you look at it, it is a makeshift which has been put forward at the last minute to help a provincial premier try to salvage something

from what is happening in the province of Saskatchewan at the present time.

I think of the statements made by officials of the grain trade in western Canada and compare them with the statement made by the minister today. The minister said he was in Washington on September 12.

• (5:40 p.m.)

The minister came back from Washington, and what action did he take? He comes to the House of Commons and says to the people of Canada, "We will support the price of wheat; we will pay the grain producers of western Canada the difference between the price they sell at on world markets and the price set in the international wheat agreement". Unless I am mistaken, this is an indication that the minister's mission in Washington failed.

Mr. Churchill: That is right.

Mr. Nasserden: The minister expects continued sales of grain at prices lower than the minimums set under the new international wheat agreement. That is the only conclusion one can come to. Yet the hon. member for Medicine Hat and the Minister of Trade and Commerce say that all will be well as a result of the action that has been taken today.

Charlie Gibbings, the president of the Saskatchewan wheat pool, had this to say, according to the *Globe and Mail* of September 13. The article comes from Regina.

Mr. Nicholson: Listen to what he will say tomorrow.

Mr. Nasserden: I know what he will say tomorrow. He will say that this is a makeshift policy embarked on by this government; that it has absolutely no relation to the cost of production today; that it has no relation to the promises made by the Liberal party in two or three election campaigns to the producers of western Canada. That is what Charlie Gibbings and the farm leaders of western Canada will say, though they will thank you for the pittance you have given them.

When I congratulated the minister last summer on the progress he was making in western Canada and the image that he was building, I hoped that my praise would not go to his head.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: Don't congratulate him again.