

not mind it if I put it in that way in this instance—in making this gift to the needy and heroic people of Greece.

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): Following the hon. member's remarks I might just mention that as of May 9 of this year Canada has sent a total of 11,172,308 bushels. I am occasionally asked as to the certainty of this wheat, and all of this wheat, getting to the people for whom it is intended. Just recently I have had an opportunity of discussing this matter with people who are positively in touch with this, and I shall take just a moment or two to give the committee some information given to me by those people. As a direct result of wheat shipped by Canada to Greece three million Greeks are being provided with a basic bread ration of approximately two hundred grams or, roughly, half a pound a day. Greek officials have estimated that many hundreds of thousands of Greek lives have been saved by Canada's contribution. The wheat shipments have given the Greek nation the certainty of being able to secure bread freely and fairly. Though not large, the bread ration has been a vital factor in sustaining Greece during her long period of suffering.

Before the war Greece used to import one-third of her foodstuffs. She was broken and impoverished by her heroic seven months' struggle against Italy and Germany. Then came the terrible famine of 1941, to which my hon. friend has just referred, when people died in the streets of starvation, and at one stage the death rate in Athens was at least ten times normal. It was against this background of suffering that Canada's wheat shipments began in the spring of 1942, under the terms of an international agreement. We are positively assured by the best authority that all our wheat has reached the Greek people for whom it is intended. The Swedish Red Cross and the International Red Cross, with the Swedish government acting in a supervisory capacity, are in charge of the Greek distribution in Greece.

Mr. MacNICOL: I can endorse what the minister has just said. Quite a number of Greeks live in the riding of Davenport, and they are extremely fine citizens. In several cases members of a family are now holding high positions in the allied service in Europe and North Africa. Some of the young men whom I know quite well not only are participating in the fighting but rendering wonderful service as interpreters. I heartily endorse the idea of sending wheat to Greece; in fact I should like to see it sent in larger quantities. Think of it for a moment; just a few million Greeks stood up like lions against Italy, who sent many hundreds of thousands of soldiers in

an attempt to conquer that little nation, but until the Germans sent division after division to support the Italians the Greeks more than held their own. The least this great country of Canada can do is to alleviate the suffering of these people as much as possible. This is one way in which we can help our own people by buying wheat from them and relieving the surplus in Canada, and at the same time help feed these starving people. I say all honour to every effort, no matter by whom made, to relieve the sufferings of the gallant Greeks.

Mr. QUELCH: I am heartily in favour of this gift to Greece, and I am also heartily in favour of the provisions of UNRRA, whose provisions I hope will be sufficiently wide in scope to take care of any situation that may arise in future. But why should this wheat not be sent to Greece under the provisions of UNRRA? Was the arrangement made before UNRRA was set up, and in that case will this wheat be made available to Greece in future under UNRRA?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): The hon. member is correct in thinking that this item is dealt with separately because it started before UNRRA was organized.

Mr. QUELCH: And in future?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): We propose to carry it on in this way. It is just as good for the Greek people as in any other way.

Mr. QUELCH: It seems a little odd to have an organization such as UNRRA to take care of the stricken areas, and then find gifts made outside of UNRRA. Where does UNRRA begin and where does it end?

Mr. MacKINNON (Edmonton West): It has been pointed out to me that UNRRA does not enter into the picture in supplying goods to a country that has been overrun, until that country is liberated.

Mr. MacNICOL: The wheat was sent before UNRRA was thought of.

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's): I hope the minister is assured that the wheat we send gets to the Greek people and not to the nazis, though I suppose that is a chance we must take. I heartily endorse the idea of sending this wheat to Greece. After all, the Greeks and the people of the British empire have always stood for freedom. We can never forget the great part played by Greece in fighting a delaying action at a most important time in the history of the war, when they held the fort against great odds. They knew what would happen to them; they knew the difficulties they were