

Wheat—Marketing of Surplus

at Vancouver from \$1.88 a bushel to \$1.78. It has lowered the price at Fort William from \$1.82½ to \$1.72½. That—and I shall quote again—is the “grave situation in the matter of the international wheat trade”. Well, that may or may not be a grave situation. But in any case, if it is not a grave situation, we will discuss it in those terms.

What is the policy of the Canadian government? That policy was laid down in 1943. All the wheat produced in the prairie provinces is delivered to a compulsory pool managed by a wheat board, which reports to its shareholders and is the property of the shareholders, who are the producers of the prairie provinces. It is the duty of that board to sell Canada's wheat crop to the best advantage for the account of the producer. And I gathered from the meeting of the committee that hon. members who attended that committee believed the board was doing just that.

The suggestion is made tonight—entirely without foundation—that Canada is losing its place in world marketing, and particularly losing its place in the British market. What are the facts? I have here a document showing the world trade in wheat, in millions of bushels, annually. In the period from 1934 to 1938 the average world trade was 534 million bushels. Canada's participation in that trade was 178 million bushels, or 33.3 per cent of the total. In 1945-46 the total trade was 876 million bushels; Canada's participation was 366 million bushels, or 41.8 per cent of the world trade. That was the year which included the end of the war. Then in 1946-47 total world trade was 746 million bushels, of which our share was 229 million, or 30.1 per cent. In 1947-48 total world trade was 946 million bushels, of which our share was 209 million, or 22.1 per cent.

Mr. Rowe: Getting less all the time.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Well, unfortunately, we had a short crop that year. In 1948-49 world trade was 992 million bushels, of which our share was 222 million, or 22.4 per cent. In 1949-50 world trade was 846 million bushels, of which our share was 236 million, or 27.9 per cent of the total. In 1950-51 total world trade was 933 million bushels, of which our share was 225 million or 24.2 per cent. In 1951-52 world trade that year went up to 1,065 million bushels, of which our share was 346 million, or 32.5 per cent of the total. In 1952-53 world trade was 958 million bushels, of which our share was 378 million, or 39.5 per cent of the total.

Mr. Gardiner: Going up all the time.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): And this is the interesting part for my hon. friends who have been declaiming tonight: In 1953-54, up to May 15, there were 496 million bushels that had entered into world trade; as of that date our share was 196 million bushels, or 39.5 per cent. In other words, so far as our share of world trade is concerned, we are riding at the peak.

Mr. Argue: Does the minister have the figures broken down for the period beginning at the first of this year?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Month by month, do you mean?

Mr. Argue: No, the percentage. The minister gave the over-all trade in wheat for this crop year to date. Has he the figures showing our percentage in the total world trade for a recent month?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Well, this is from July 1, 1953 to May 15, 1954; do you require any more recent than that?

Mr. Argue: Has the minister a four-month period? Has he the figure for the last four months, or for the last month or two?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I have said many times in this House of Commons that export figures for one month indicate very little. I have seen people use those figures in an election, and before the election was over they were sorry they had used them, because the next month was quite different.

Mr. Argue: Is it not true that the trend is down?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): “The trend is down”—what? We are riding at the highest proportion of world trade we have had in the last ten years.

Mr. Argue: Pretty small trade.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): “Pretty small trade”, do you say? But this year every country had a good crop; we cannot control that situation.

Now, it is suggested that we are losing our position in the United Kingdom. Well, official statistics published by the United Kingdom show the following imports of Canadian wheat as compared with wheat from all other sources for the period August 1, 1953 to April 30, 1954. I shall go back, first, to 1951-52. For those nine months in that year Britain imported 2,949,155 long tons, of which Canada's share in that year was 1,820,273 long tons, or 61.7 per cent of all imports. In the same period in 1952-53 Britain imported 2,487,482 long tons of which Canada supplied 1,565,969, or 63 per cent. In 1953-54, up to April 30 Britain imported 2,521,680