

Wheat Export Prices

familiar with the general pattern I will not elaborate on it. However, I should like to refer to a statement made by a former Minister of Trade and Commerce, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), as well as to some statements made by Mr. Winters when he was Minister of Trade and Commerce. The general attitude at that time was to tell the farmers of western Canada: "You grow the wheat and we'll sell it".

This indicates to me that neither minister knew what he was talking about. Neither had any idea where he was going in terms of agricultural and trade policy. What they said was simply an item of political propaganda.

The farmers of western Canada are getting fed up with this sort of cavalier attitude on the part of the government and its ministers and they are demanding straightforward answers to straightforward questions. They want action taken by the government. During the past two or three years we have witnessed a series of developments which have steadily eroded the economic position and welfare of western Canadian farmers and placed many western Canadian farmers on the verge of bankruptcy.

The government has asked us what our proposals are and what we suggest the government should do. We have put forward all sorts of proposals. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) tried to make a little political hay when he said that the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) had placed more proposals forward tonight in regard to this particular matter than had been put forward at any previous time in this house. The minister knows that that is not the case. He is aware that both within and without the house spokesmen of the farmers of western Canada have advocated a comprehensive program involving both short-term and long-term measures to deal with their problems.

Just one example of this was given at the meeting between officials of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the Prime Minister in Regina last week. At that time several short term, immediate proposals were put before the Prime Minister. The first was that there be an immediate payment to the grain producers based on 1968-69 cultivated acreage of \$2 per acre up to a maximum of \$2,000. Secondly, that there be a guaranteed floor price for export wheat of not less than the present International Grains Arrangement minimum

of \$1.95½ basis No. 1 Northern at the Lakehead. The third was that sales of all wheat for domestic human consumption by the Canadian Wheat Board be at a price of \$2.95½ per bushel. A number of other long-term proposals were also placed before the Prime Minister.

I do not see how the government can get around providing a guaranteed wheat price based on the International Grains Arrangement minima. After all, this was an agreement that was entered into with other nations of the world, not by the farmers of western Canada or by the Canadian Wheat Board, but by the nation of Canada. It is the Canadian nation that has the responsibility of living up to the agreement in terms of its consequences for western Canadian farmers.

With regard to the two-price system, farm organizations, my own political party and even friends of hon. members opposite have made certain representations. I am sure that even the premier of Saskatchewan advocated a certain course of action. I am sure that members across the way are familiar with this hon. gentleman.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. gentleman but his time has expired, unless he has unanimous consent to continue.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Burton: Typical Liberal arrogance!

• (11:00 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

Mr. Boulanger: On a point of order, sir, I had hoped you would recognize me. I have been on my feet a couple of times trying to catch your eye.

Mr. Paproski: What does the hon. member know about wheat?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): I have already recognized the hon. member for Brandon-Souris.

Mr. Boulanger: On a point of order, sir, while I would not question Your Honour's decision, I wish to point out that I have been here all day as an observer. I am not a farm expert, perhaps, but that does not prevent my noticing that only two socialists and one Creditiste member remain in the house. It was the socialists who insisted on this debate.