

INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT

Following for the Right Honourable C.D. Howe from Robertson, Begins: Lawrie and I saw Hitchman and his colleagues again on Wednesday, February 8, and spoke to them in the sense of your telegrams 193 and 128. They took note of the Canadian point of view, which they promised to communicate to their ministers. The discussion was desultory, with recrimination just below the surface on both sides. They are expecting to see Sharp and McNamara when they arrive on February 16, but did not anticipate that there could be any Cabinet reconsideration of the United Kingdom position between now and then. Yesterday morning the United Kingdom group saw McCarthy, whose comments on their approach and proposals were very similar to ours.

2. At our meeting on Wednesday I had raised the question of the United Kingdom informing Anderson, as President of the Conference, of the position they were taking. Yesterday afternoon Anderson met the United Kingdom group less Hitchman and was told of the conclusions they had reached. I gather that he dissented very vigorously, and followed up his observations this morning with a letter to Harwood, the text of which is repeated in my immediately following telegram.†

3. As you know, the Canadians in London have carefully kept out of any discussion of United Kingdom policy toward the IWA over the last two years. I thought myself this was the right policy, but it may have been a mistake. I fear our reticence may have confirmed their complacency that everything was working out for the best, particularly as I have never met anything to suggest that United Kingdom representatives in Canada have ever attempted to warn their government of the general Canadian feeling on this subject.

4. I have asked Heathcoat Amory and Home to have dinner with me alone this evening. Neither of them has had anything to do with past relations with the Wheat Agreement, but now they are probably the two ministers most directly concerned. I shall let you know if they confirm the line taken by their officials in their conversations with the Australians and ourselves ends.

N.A. ROBERTSON

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*Le haut-commissaire au Royaume-Uni
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures
High Commissioner in United Kingdom
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 159

London, February 16, 1956

SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Following for Mitchell Sharpe from McNamara, Begins: Accompanied by the High Commissioner, Wilson, Davidson and I met George Bishop, who will again head the U.K. Delegation. Curzon of C.R.O. also attended.

2. Bishop stated that the U.K. will not support or take part in the negotiation of a New Wheat Agreement patterned on the present Agreement. He did not give reasons for decision of ministers, but indicated serious thought on their part in reaching foregoing conclusion. From his remarks we gathered impression that while the U.K. will not negotiate a renewed Agreement they will take position that an Agreement similar to the current agreement could again operate without U.K. participation.