

of Agriculture for Manitoba, the Honourable James Downey, and the man in charge of the marketing commission in Alberta. The proportion of people on that program levelling an attack against the Wheat Board would probably outnumber the comments in favour and support of the Wheat Board three or four to one. Only one representative of the farm organizations, and the general grain trade, was there to defend the Canadian Wheat Board. There were no other representatives of the farm organizations.

I will have further comments to make on this matter as time goes on. In my opinion, the Canadian Wheat Board has done, and is doing, an absolutely tremendous job.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Argue: I believe the CBC's attack on this public institution—and this is not the first attack that the CBC has launched on similar organizations—is completely and absolutely misleading.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Hear, hear.

Senator Argue: The Canadian Wheat Board is doing a tremendous job, if only to mention the completion of that huge sale, that huge agreement, with the Soviet Union, involving no commission whatsoever.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Argue: If the private grain trade had been in there, whether it had taken one per cent, 2 per cent, or whatever, it would have cost the farmers tens of millions of dollars.

Hon. Martial Asselin: Another speech.

● (1440)

Senator Argue: I think it is very regrettable that members of the party opposite—not members in this chamber, but members, very, very important members, in the west—should be taking that kind of posture.

I want to say that I think the attack by the Conservative Party and the Conservative government in Alberta against the Canadian Wheat Board is being softened. They may be having second thoughts. I met with them on another matter some days ago, and I noticed that they were not nearly as aggressive as I thought they might be.

There was an editorial in the *Edmonton Journal* of May 27 about the agreement with the Soviet Union—

Senator Asselin: This has nothing to do with the question.

Senator Argue: This is part of the answer.

Senator Asselin: You are making a speech.

Senator Argue: I am defending the Canadian Wheat Board, and I think that is my responsibility. That was a virulent, prejudiced and unprincipled attack that was levied by the CBC in this program, that was basically destitute of facts, destitute of arguments that would carry much weight—

Senator Asselin: We are not quarrelling with you.

Senator Argue: —and destitute of voices from the large majority of farmers who support the Canadian Wheat Board.

Anyway, this editorial is about the agreement, and it concludes as follows:

In fairness however, the provinces now should drop their errant criticisms of Canadian Wheat Board marketing. Premier Lougheed was particularly critical of the Wheat Board's sales effort after his visit to the Soviet Union in 1977. Events have proven him wrong. The Wheat Board is an effective agency in the federal government's pursuit of international trade.

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, I am relieved that Senator Olson is not here, because he would undoubtedly have felt impelled to remonstrate with his colleague for the type of reply he has given. I am thinking of framing that reply so that it will be available for Senator Olson's perusal. I hope also that the minister will take advantage of the opportunity to send a copy of today's *Hansard* to the people at the CBC who wrote the program—

Senator Argue: I certainly will.

Senator Roblin: —because I think members opposite should take note that I have not taken a position with respect to that broadcast as to whether it is right or wrong. I have taken a position asking for clarification of the facts; because, if the facts were wrong in that program, then they should be put right. I have asked the minister to give us the information about those facts. He takes advantage of this opportunity to say what he has said, and I do not complain about that, though I am sure the Leader of the Government would if he followed his usual tactic in this matter.

I would like to ask my honourable friend to give me some more information. Has it been the policy of the Canadian Wheat Board to inform the farmers whose money it is as to what the result of their foreign exchange trading, gains or losses, has been? The reason I ask the question is that in almost all commercial corporations that I know of, if they have a foreign exchange loss or gain in their transactions they report it in their annual statements. I have looked through the annual statement of the Canadian Wheat Board for 1980—I have not had a chance to look at any others—and though I may have missed it, and I would like to be corrected if I have, I can find nothing in it that really bears on this point. It seems to me that we should know whether this sort of information about foreign exchange transactions—particularly when the amounts involved are quite substantial—is made known to the farmers who comprise the Canadian Wheat Board's clientele.

Senator Argue: I shall be very happy to take that question as notice and make the necessary inquiries. I think I know part of the answer, but I want to get a full answer, so I am happy to do that as a result of the question asked by Senator Roblin.

Senator Roblin: I am much relieved by the tenor of the minister's answer, because after his first reply I was a little concerned about his blood pressure, and I would have felt