

*Government Orders*

My motion proposes that a deduction fixed by the governor in council shall apply at the same rate to all holders of certificates in the designated area. First there should be a little bit of translation as to what that means.

Holders of certificates are people who are eligible for a final payment under the wheat board for the four pools that exist for various types of barley and wheat. These are people who will have a final payment accrue to them at the end of the crop year when there is a surplus that has accrued from the sales and marketing activities of the wheat board. That surplus is distributed on the basis of how many tonnes of each grade and variety the farmer delivered.

• (1550)

This act is proposing to take a certain amount from each of those pools which would go into specific research which would be designated and allocated by the Western Grain Research Fund. This works in conjunction with the other granting agencies which set out the programs that will receive public funding for research, whether it is for plant research as in this case, or for engineering or other disciplines throughout the country.

I am proposing this motion because the act as written now permits some parts of the wheat board designated area, which for those who do not know what that is, it is essentially the prairie region plus the mountain valleys and the valleys running into Thunder Bay in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. It is essentially the northern end of the great plains region. The climate and the soil and the farming technique there is such that most of the varietal research that will be done will be only applicable to that region. Therefore the plant varieties we develop for that region are usually of no application to regions in the rest of Canada. It is a nice, clear cut area whose economic interest in the area of plant breeding is basically the same.

The province of Alberta has decided to take a check off for barley and some types of wheat. That exists and is possible under provincial legislation. It is Alberta's constitutional right to do so. If we are going to take an action as a federal Parliament with a federal program, it should apply to all of the area the program is designed to cover. There should not be written into the law the ability for some regions to opt out. If some regions want to use their powers under the Constitution to do a similar thing, so be it.

We have plenty of examples of how that has been applied. For instance, when the GST was applied it was applied at the same rate right across the country, even though it was a tax on consumer goods and some of the provinces already had consumer taxes on consumer goods. However there was no recognition that because for example Newfoundland had a 9 per cent provincial sales tax that we would not bother to collect it in

Newfoundland because those taxpayers were already contributing to the tax system in Newfoundland.

I think it is inappropriate for us to put forward federal legislation that will apply to all of the wheat board designated region that covers as I said basically the northern plains of North America. That is a very concise and well-defined region that has very clearly defined needs because of climate, geography and agrology for basically the same services. It makes no sense to have a separate rule for growers of some crops in some of the provinces.

Therefore, I would expect that there would be considerable interest in the House to try to apply the rules equitably and fairly across all the regions. I presume I would get support for this very logical motion.

Alberta growers may wish to continue with the activities they have been carrying out under their check off system which is different in many respects from the check off for research that this program is collecting for. As an example, the Alberta program only contributes less than half of their collected moneys to actual research and the rest is either held in trust or used for administrative costs. With this program however we have been assured by the promoters at the department of agriculture that virtually all of the funds will be allocated for research through the Western Grain Research Fund.

• (1555)

If my amendment does not pass, I do not think it is fair for the contributors in Alberta under the proposal to contribute a lesser amount to the research needs of the area and still benefit from the activities of the surrounding areas. Barley growers in Alberta will benefit just as much as barley growers in British Columbia or Saskatchewan from the research that is done on barley varieties. Yet if we go along with the way the bill is currently drafted without my amendment they will be paying less toward research for the same benefit as everyone else gets.

I have no objection to Alberta growers taxing themselves by means of a check off to perform their political, administrative, and other activities the fund is now engaged in. However they should not expect the rest of us in the other provinces to finance the research and to give them the benefits from barley research they will get by opting out.

I urge members of the House to support this motion because it makes sense, because it is fair, because it is the cheapest way to get the most bucks for research. This will work if Alberta farmers pay the same rate as Saskatchewan farmers, as Manitoba farmers, as farmers in the rest of the wheat board designated area. I urge support for this because I think the only way the federal government and the federal jurisdiction can continue to receive the kind of respect this country ought to receive is if we treat them all in an equitable manner.