

Mr. Schumacher: Where did you get that idea?

Mr. Nystrom: I think all the hon. member has to do is go out and talk to some of his own constituents.

Mr. Korchinski: Some organizations are not in favour of it.

Mr. Nystrom: The hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) says that some of the organizations may not be in favour of it. If that is the case I suggest they are few and far between because most farmers are interested in strengthening the Wheat Board, and in orderly marketing. Of course, you do have people who are critical of some of the ways in which the Wheat Board acts. There are many who feel it should be more aggressive, that it should be permitted to sell grain in a much more vigorous way.

But this is not the fault of the Wheat Board. This is not the fault of the basic idea of the orderly marketing of grains. This is the fault of the government for not giving the Board enough money, enough leeway, and enough motivation to go out and pursue better markets. If these commodities are included under the Wheat Board there is a better chance of finding markets for them, and a much better chance of getting more stable prices for the farmers. After all, this is what we want. Since when did the private grain trade have the interests of the farmer at heart? When did they become the friend of the farmer? Their purpose is to make a profit, as large a profit as possible. This is why I urge the minister to act as soon as possible, and not leave the whole thing up in the air, as apparently is being done today. We must strengthen the Wheat Board, make it more vigorous, give it more power and influence. We must make it a more aggressive agency. This is what the overwhelming majority of farmers in western Canada want.

I do not want to repeat myself, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to say that western agriculture is in really serious danger today. Farmers are rapidly disappearing from the land. The net income of the farmer has gone down and his costs have gone up. If we do not do something soon to reverse this trend the small farms will disappear, we will have huge corporate impersonal farms; local towns will become ghost communities or remain just as service centres for the corporate farms. Just a few weeks ago the Dominion Bureau of Statistics showed that net farm income in Saskatchewan over the two year period from 1968 to 1970 fell by 56 per cent. This is a gigantic drop. It underlines the severity of the problem facing western agriculture. And it is not only the farmer who is suffering. The operators of small businesses are affected, the unemployed, and in fact the whole population. A drop in income of 56 per cent should make us all realize there is something drastically and fundamentally wrong.

The bill before us is only a small one, but it provides for a fundamental change that would give a little more stability to some suffering farmers in western Canada. I hope the minister acts as soon as possible to have rye, flax and rapeseed brought under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. Perhaps when he rises to reply he will elaborate a bit more, tell us that he intends to

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make a thorough, in-depth study of the matter, and indicate what his final decision will be. I have put forward what I find to be the general position of most people I talk to in rural Saskatchewan, and that is the position of the farm organizations also. It is about time that the farmer did have some bargaining power. It is about time that the farmer did have some protection. This is one little piece of legislation that would help the farmer in contending with forces which he cannot control by himself.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my neighbour from Yorkton as he recited the dire conditions in which many western communities find themselves. He stated that there is a need for greater income in western Canada. He pointed out that some rural communities were depleted, and with all of this I agree entirely. I think he presented a good case showing there was a need for effective means to increase the income of the western farmers, and he also mentioned the needs of western businessmen.

Three of the major crops that western producers have been selling, wheat, oats and barley, have been under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board for some time. Mr. Speaker, it was the dynamic salesmanship of the Wheat Board that piled up the huge surpluses that we now have, and so the hon. member for Yorkton immediately refutes his own argument when he says we should put other grains under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. Even though the Wheat Board was not able to handle the situation with regard to wheat, oats and barley, the hon. member suggests that it be given control over three more grains. And he suggests that then we will have orderly marketing.

We have had orderly marketing, Mr. Speaker. As a result we have stacked our surpluses up so neatly and so high that the whole world can see them. It doesn't matter where you stand, you can see piles of wheat in Canada.

Mr. Nystrom: Do you want to abolish the Wheat Board?

Mr. Korchinski: I did not suggest that I wanted to abolish the Wheat Board, but I do not want it burdened with any more commodities since it has indicated it cannot handle the three commodities already under its control.

The one salvation western farmers have had was the fact that rapeseed and flaxseed were outside the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. It was not the Wheat Board's salesmanship that sold those commodities, to the point that we had no more rapeseed left to sell. In fact we had to increase our production of rapeseed, and we hope to increase it again. It was not the Wheat Board that did the work for us. It was the Rapeseed Association and the private trade which did the effective work. The hon. member may chastise the private trade, and suggest that it is living off the farmers, but I do not know how an elevator system can be maintained without deductions collected from the producer. As a producer I realize that, and what concerns me is that the elevator system may disappear if these other three grains come under the