

theirs in the international trade policies of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I must follow in the footsteps of the other members and congratulate the minister on the announcement he has just made concerning western producers.

This announcement, which we expected as a matter of fact, is merely a repetition of his statement to the effect that he would soon be settling the question of final payments.

He is merely telling the western farmers that the Canadian Wheat Board will start mailing the cheques on March 28.

He said himself, a short while ago, that such a statement does not call for congratulations. But I suggest that it does to a certain extent, since a small payment is better than none. I can see that the western farmers are a little disappointed about the 9 per cent reduction which affects their product.

In his last statement in the house, the minister was saying that owing to the invasion of the market by the American government, farmers in the West would have to accept a reduction in the price of wheat. It already underwent a reduction last year.

I realize that the more the price of the production goes down, the more that of consumption increases. When the price paid to the producer goes down by 2 or 3 per cent, the business-man as he sends the product to the consumer must very often increase its price by 10 or 12 per cent.

There lies the paradox which is always obvious, and we wonder whether this year the producer in the West will once more be the loser.

• (11:20 a.m.)

But the winner is still the businessman. In fact, in the province of Quebec, we shall pay even more than last year for the wheat that is already selling at a good price, and certainly it is not the producer who will get a profit but indeed finance.

Therefore, I ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), to make the overdue inquiry into the trade of agricultural products.

The cause of the evil does not lie in production, or the weather, but indeed in high finance, that may, at its convenience, "swindle" the consumer, in selling at exaggerated prices, compared with those which are paid to the producer.

Canada Evidence Act

I know that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who is full of good will, is at last going, as we have been asking him for six years, to make a probe into high finance. I believe that if he corrects the evil today, he will be in a position next year to announce a rise in the prices paid to the producer.

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE—CANADA EVIDENCE ACT

AMENDMENT EXPUNGING CRIMINAL RECORDS OF MINOR OFFENDERS

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-186, to amend the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act (Expunging of Criminal Records).

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the house that the hon. member shall have leave to introduce the said bill?

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to expunge the criminal records of persons who have committed a minor offence three years after the serving of a sentence or the payment of the fine, and to do likewise after a period of five years for a more serious offence. The expungement will not be automatic. The power to expunge a criminal record would be vested in a Board of Corrections Review which would determine whether there has been reformation and rehabilitation of the applicant in determining the application for expungement.

A short time ago I introduced a bill for the abolition of corporal punishment. This bill for the expungement of criminal records is another step in fully restoring the social status of reformed offenders, and to move more closely to the development of a civilized society.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to remind the hon. member that his explanation should be brief at this time.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

CANADIAN BUSINESS RECORDS PROTECTION ACT

REMOVAL OF RECORDS PURSUANT TO FOREIGN COURT ORDER

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-187, respecting the