

*Adjournment Debate*

The Hon. Member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre (Mr. Laporte) has the floor.

[English]

AGRICULTURE—REMOVAL OF OATS FROM CANADIAN  
WHEAT BOARD—RESULTS OF DECIMA POLL

**Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rose in the House on May 4 last to question the Minister of Agriculture with respect to the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, particularly with respect to oats under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board which at that time had not yet been removed.

My question to the minister was this: If it could be demonstrated that a large majority of producers in western Canada did not want oats removed from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board, would the minister heed those wishes and in fact would the minister allow the producers in western Canada to decide the future of their own Canadian Wheat Board?

The minister did not answer my question. Instead, he simply went on to state that there had been ongoing consultations.

In the supplementary part of the question he again did not answer but outlined some of the groups which had been consulted. These included, as reported in *Hansard*, the United Grain Growers Association, the Canadian Western Wheat Growers Association, the Western Barley Growers Association, the Prairie Canola Growers Association, the Alberta Pork Producers Development Board, the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, the Cattlemen's Association, the Manitoba Farm Business Association, the Manitoba Hog Producers Marketing Board, the Saskatchewan Marketing Board, the Government of Manitoba, the Government of Alberta and the Government of Saskatchewan.

It is all very well to have consulted these groups, but I am wondering what o these groups have to do with the future of oats under the Canadian Wheat Board.

With respect to the United Grain Growers and with respect to the Canadian Wheat Growers Association, it is valid to consult those groups because they in fact have oats producers with them. But I would like to know what

the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission has to do with the production of oats in western Canada.

Further, what does the Cattlemen's Association, the Manitoba Farm Business Association, the Manitoba Hog Producers Marketing Board and the Saskatchewan Marketing Board have to do with it? They do not grow oats. What does the Western Barley Growers Association and the Prairie Canola Growers Association have to do with it? They do not represent oats producers; they represent other commodities.

Mr. Speaker, what the minister failed to point out was that there had been a Decima poll that had just been completed at that time. The minister knew about it. That poll pointed out that well over 70 per cent of producers in western Canada felt that they had not been consulted on the oats issue. Furthermore, fully two-thirds of producers in western Canada wanted to have oats remain under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

What the minister failed to point out was that the prairie wheat pools were not consulted, specifically the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool which is probably the largest individual farm organization in the country and which opposed the removal of oats.

The minister did not indicate that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture actually passed a resolution at its last convention saying that oats should not be removed without a vote by the producers in western Canada. The minister did not even point out the fact that the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board had not been consulted. The Minister for Grains and Oilseeds has pointed out that he had no obligation to consult with the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board. The advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board is a democratically elected body representing some 140,000 permit book holders in western Canada. It is there to advise the wheat board.

It is true that the minister does not have to consult with the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board, but there is no obligation for him to consult with the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission either. I would think it is much more logical to consult with the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board than it is to consult with the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission with respect to the removal of oats from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.