

Wheat Sales

is put into effect. I wonder how soon we shall see the western farmer watching the futures market for feed grains as he is watching it now for flax and rapeseed. It is about time the minister and his cohort, the Minister of Agriculture, put their policies on the line in this chamber instead of hiding behind orders in council.

I want, finally, to say something about the future of grain marketing. There is a great tendency, when wheat sales are slow, to believe that they will always be slow, and that when they begin to boom that they will always boom. I suggest to hon. members who are interested in the subject that they get a copy of Economic Planning and read it. They will find that Mr. Butz, Secretary of Agriculture for the United States says he is bringing 30 million acres into production, that United States agriculture is geared to produce more crops than can be sold at reasonable returns to farmers. In the same publication, they can read that the major exporters of wheat and coarse grains will likely find domestic consumption and exports markets increasing slower than production. If the minister can be charged with any failure to discharge his responsibilities, it is his failure to make a statement outlining how he sees the future of grain markets for Canadian farmers, for his failure to outline a storage program, a guaranteed price program and a policy of support for farmers. To date, farmers have not been given such an assurance.

● (1640)

We should have a policy that will give the farmers that assurance, and that is what we on this side of the House are asking for today. But again, the minister has failed to produce. He has failed to measure up to the demands of the farmers of western Canada. When he got a shellacking on his lousy stabilization bill, he did not have the courage, wit or ingenuity to come back to the House and present something that was really useful to the western farmers. Instead, he makes sly remarks and throws off statements about what he is going to do with the Crowsnest pass rates. All right, Mr. Speaker, what are he and his government going to do with the Crowsnest pass rates? Why does he not tell the House what he is going to do instead of making sly remarks in Winnipeg—and sly is what they were.

Why does the minister not get off his butt and tell us what he is going to do about a storage program for Canadian grain when we get into a full supply position once more? These are the answers for which we are waiting. I am not interested in the needling tactics used by the Conservative Party this afternoon regarding the pricing policy of the Canadian Wheat Board; that does not interest me at all. I know how the Canadian Wheat Board operates. I know the men who are there. They are honourable and able men and they will do the best job they can. If the minister interferes with them, whether it be the present minister or had it been the previous minister, the member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton), I know they would resign their posts.

As a result of this brief debate today, which as the minister has said is the only chance we have had to discuss the subject—and I am grateful to the official opposition for at least bringing the debate about—perhaps the minister's ears will open and he will listen to some of the suggestions that are put forward, both in this House

[Mr. Gleave.]

and in the country. Because if the minister thinks everything is bland and easy in rural Saskatchewan, he is wrong. A lot of people are adding up the situation and asking themselves what comes next.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like, first of all, to tell my hon. colleagues that long before I became a member of Parliament, I often had the opportunity of reading in the official report of the House, the many speeches dealing with wheat, and the problems of grain growing in the West.

I am not saying the question bored me; on the contrary, but I mean that the problem has existed for a very long time, that it should concern the whole population of Canada with a view to finding solutions that are really fair to both western and eastern producers.

I have here a newspaper article that deals most appropriately with the matter, and I quote:

(1) Following the opening of the Canadian Prairies at the end of the last century, western farmers tried to improve their marketing system; this led to the setting up of the first grain marketing co-operative in 1906.

That was long before some of us came to this planet! And now back to the quotation:

(2) The First World War led to a grains monopoly: a grain supervisors' commission was established.

Now, even at that time, there was a monopoly and exploiters took advantage of the situation, getting rich at the expense of grain producers. Things have not changed much because if we could go down to the crux of the problem, we would find enough to have parliamentarians trembling for having failed to study the problem and found solutions.

The third paragraph reads as follows, and I quote:

(3) During the 20s, the co-operatives created their own marketing agency but found themselves in a difficult situation with the 1929-30 crisis.

Even though I was a young man at that time, I remember a most lively election campaign, that of 1930, while the Liberals were in office, under the Right Hon. Mackenzie King and when Mr. Bennett was the Conservative party leader. At that time I used to attend political meetings, because I have always been interested, and I heard everybody dealing with the grain problem, the problem of unsold wheat, and also of the dairy industry and of butter at 14 cents a pound. You will remember that the government was overthrown by the people and that the country's administration was entrusted to the Conservative party under the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett who remained in office for five years.

The Canadian Wheat Board was created in 1935 to stabilize wheat prices. Now, this commission is operating, as all other commissions, with administrators who doubtless are doing their best to meet efficiently the requirements of the true "owners" of this commission who are, after all, the grain producers. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) is responsible for this commission before Parliament.

But I must admit in all fairness that over the last few years, whatever the party in office, wheat sales have increased substantially. New horizons were opened at last and it was decided to trade with countries such as Russia,