

effect the enabling legislation in Bill C-238 and the amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. This would make it possible at a future date, by Order in Council, to bring rye, flaxseed and rapeseed under the jurisdiction of the bill. It seems to me to be a back door approach to the implementation of a supposedly long-term plan which exists in the mind of the minister. If that is so, why does he not say what he has in mind?

I am sure this situation must leave questions in the minds of members of this House so far as the committee system is concerned. We have had other examples of how it can break down. There was the unanimous report brought in by the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development with respect to declaring sovereignty in the north. Only after a motion was brought before the House to adopt this report was it finally brought to our attention and by a ruling of the Speaker a vote was allowed. There was a similar situation in the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. That committee came to certain conclusions regarding the defence policies of this country, and before the report was considered the government had gone off on a tangent and established its own policy.

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I emphasize that I think the minister is doing a great disservice to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, the members of this House and the whole parliamentary system.

Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent): Listening to today's debate on this subject, Mr. Speaker, confirms my belief that the government does not care for committees unless it is to use them as working housewives use day-care centres—it is a nice place to send the boys while the executive runs the country; it will keep the boys out of trouble.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCutcheon: As far as Parliament is concerned, Mr. Speaker, the main purpose of the committees as presently structured and administered by this government is to act as day-care centres chiefly for government members who might be a little restive. The reason is clear. For instance, in the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence 27 members voted to remain in NATO, three Socialists voted to leave but before the report was even considered the government had made its decision and was withdrawing troops from NATO. So I say again that the government has no intention at all of listening to committees; they are just day-care centres.

Another example is the committee which considered the Canada Water Act, which obviously meant to do the best job it could for the country. Clause 20, I think it was, was accepted by the committee, but their opinion was reversed by the government. Apparently it just depends on whose ox is being gored. If the committee report does not follow the lines laid down by the executive, this government almost acts like a crocodile—it would eat its young.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that basically and fundamentally the Canadian Wheat Board just wants to take

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three more products under its mantle. What we are about to witness is more control over the poor old farmer; three more of his products are to come under a socialist-controlled marketing scheme. If the Wheat Board could claim to improve marketing there might be some excuse, but I recall that the minister said this would not be necessarily the case. What we are discussing tonight is just another case of the arrogance of the executive of this government and complete lack of consideration for hard working committee members, while the agricultural industry of western Canada is burdened with more bureaucracy.

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, I spoke on Bill C-238 and indeed begged that rapeseed not come under the control of the Wheat Board. The Wheat Board has not had a good record in securing sales in the markets of the world despite the assurances we had the other day about the large sale of wheat to Russia. It should not be necessary to exaggerate the benefits of that sale. I notice that it has been very cleverly hedged. The people of Canada think we have a new, \$235 million wheat sale when in fact, if we are dealing with honourable people in Russia, the sale was made over a period of some years. What they are doing is picking up the backlog of at least one-third of that total sale.

• (8:40 p.m.)

While on that subject, perhaps I did not make it clear when I said that the Prime Minister visited northern Alberta. I was referring to the then Prime Minister, the right hon. member for Prince-Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), not the present Prime Minister. Only a short time ago it was considered a great crime to sell wheat to the Communist bloc. It was a very strong plank in the platform of the Liberal party, at least in my district, to say that a man who was broad minded enough to deal with the Communist bloc should not be elected. I am consistent; I have always considered it honourable to deal with anyone who wants to buy grain.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Bigg: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the minister rising on a point of order?

Mr. Lang: No, Mr. Speaker. I wish to ask the hon. member a question.

Mr. Bigg: I would be delighted to answer it.

Mr. Lang: I wonder if the hon. member is conscious of the fact—it does not seem so from his remarks—that the first sale to any country in the Communist bloc must surely be the sale to Russia which was made in 1956 by a previous Liberal administration.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member may answer the question but I suggest to the minister