

Lisgar confirmed my suspicions. His remarks led me to conclude that the official opposition opposes our amendment because it supports discredited policies, opposes the orderly marketing of grain and other aspects of grain handling that would be beneficial to producers.

• (1450)

An hon. Member: You don't believe that, do you?

Mr. Benjamin: I urge the minister to change his mind and accept the motion. I know that many in his constituency who support his party want this amendment.

An hon. Member: This speech is for home consumption.

Mr. Benjamin: Members of farm organizations and farmers individually have, for decades, been asking for the proposal in this motion. It has been the dream of grain producers on the Prairies. They want control of their production. They want to control grain from the time they first plant it until they sell it. The dream of prairie grain growers who have wanted to control the marketing of grain and bring about an orderly marketing system goes back to 1935, when orderly marketing first began under the leadership of the late Right Hon. R. B. Bennett. He introduced that system as a sort of death bed repentance before the defeat of his government. Over the years it has been developed and now, in the main, has become the best method, I think, for handling our grains and for claiming a reasonable price. Surely, the minister ought to consider the experience of grain farmers under both systems. They have made up their minds and said that these three grains ought to be under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I hope the minister will have second thoughts and decide that the motion is acceptable. The amendment would in no way set back or interfere with the work of those people whom he has appointed to look into this question. The amendment would allow the farmers, the grain producers themselves, to make the crucial decision. Surely, that is how it ought to be. It is useless suggesting that we ought to wait for another session, perhaps another Parliament, before bringing in an amendment like ours. After all, even the minister must know that, even if we are lucky, the Canadian Wheat Board Act will not be considered again for another three or four years. That might suit those who support the grain exchange and the so-called open marketing system, but it does not suit the grain growers. Again, I ask the minister to accept the amendment and to allow grain producers to make their own decision.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I was struggling against the temptation to speak in this debate but, after listening to the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre, was persuaded that I might make a useful though limited contribution. I was somewhat struck by what the hon. member said about the official opposition supporting discredited policies. I do not accept his contention that the policy he referred to has been discredited. You know, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary for us to show a certain amount of steadiness and consistency in this House. The party the hon. member supports has been discredited at the polls for a good many years, but members of that party keep

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coming back and, most of the time, they play a useful role. Of course, at times one wonders how useful it is.

Mr. Benjamin: Thank you.

Mr. Baldwin: I do not hold against them the fact that they have been discredited.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We missed the hon. member last night.

Mr. Baldwin: They have a role to play and they play it, even though they support policies which may have been discredited.

May I now speak about the amendment? I do not like the way new section 35(3) as proposed is worded. It reads in part:

The Governor in Council shall make any regulation extending the application . . . after considering the possibility of holding a plebiscite of the producers in consultation with the appropriate representatives—

I would term that as a pretty weak amendment. If it had said there shall be a plebiscite, and the phrasing of such language is not beyond the ingenuity of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), or that there shall be a plebiscite held on behalf of the producers in certain circumstances, we should have been more inclined to give consideration to supporting this amendment, if I may use the language of the hon. member who proposed it. As it is, the language is meaningless. All the governor in council must do is decide whether there is the possibility of holding a plebiscite, in consultation with certain people. I do not think that language has that precise and positive ring which would be needed if we were to support the amendment.

The other reasons for our not supporting the amendment have been eloquently articulated by my colleagues, and their reasoning, I am sure, has persuaded many hon. members to oppose the bill. Any doubts hon. members may have harboured I expect have been resolved by the hon. member for Lisgar and other hon. members.

As to the Wheat Board, I am not opposed to it. The Wheat Board, like many organizations which have been around too long, has suffered from a hardening of the arteries. It was not doing the job it ought to have done and it took some prodding and pushing to compel the Wheat Board to do what it has been doing reasonably effectively in recent months. The prodding and pushing of the Wheat Board from this side of the House has resulted in the Wheat Board showing a great deal more virility than I thought in the last few years it would display. I am still reserving my judgment in that regard.

I have given some reasons which compel me to vote against this amendment. However, there is one more. I think we should postpone doing what is suggested until we have considered other ways of helping the farmers involved, particularly those in the rapeseed industry. An inquiry is going on at present into the possibility of including the rapeseed itself as well as rapeseed products in those items for which cheaper transport rates will apply. I should not have said rapeseed; I ought to have spoken of rapeseed oil and the by-products of rapeseed. The inquiry