

Grain Prices

and from the basic philosophical point of view of what our agricultural people mean to us here in Canada.

For that reason I think that we should consider very seriously the spirit in which this motion has been presented to this House. We want to help our farmers. We want to do something to make sure that the drought we are experiencing in the west will not unduly impact on our agricultural producers. That is the way to do it. It is not to set in motion a bureaucracy whereby prices are always guaranteed unrelated to international realities.

The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville has talked about the need for international commodity prices. I wish it were as simple as saying to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), "Go and negotiate for us an international price that will be sustained." We have seen what has happened. For example, look at the international cocoa prices, the international oil prices, the international commodity prices on all the food-stuffs, and the coffee prices. For a time these agencies may have served, but they break down and become victims of their own bigness. They become cartels unto themselves which in many cases preclude other people from getting into the business.

In considering the aspects of this motion before us, let us consider the changes that have been made in Canada in agriculture over the past few years. I am speaking about the new technologies that have been brought about, the use of fertilizers, herbicides, new types of plants and new types of wheat. I am proud to say that the most rust resistant and hardiest brand of wheat was developed here in Canada by a Canadian. This is something of which we can be very proud.

Second is this trend toward consolidation. Consolidation may be harmful in some respects. It may require dramatic changes. It may drive people off the farms, but it is also efficient. There are two sides of the coin.

Third, let us look at what we have been doing for the wheat farmers in terms of the new institutions that we have in Canada. We have the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Transport, and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. They are involved in production and transportation. We have the Canadian Grain Commission. We have the Canada Grains Council. We have the International Grains Institute. We have the Grain Transportation Co-Ordinator's office which is based in Winnipeg.

We have also undertaken to help farmers through new technologies of forecasting our agricultural needs. This goes into the aspect of what the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville was talking about in terms of what we do about planning. We have undertaken a means by which we can project fairly accurately what our grain production is going to be on a five-year cycle. The first projections related to the years 1971-1975. They are now being forecast up to the year 2000. We also have the operations of the United States department of agriculture, the World Bank, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Grains Council, all involved in helping to make the forecasts.

● (1650)

There is one aspect of this which I feel is very important. That is the symposium being sponsored by the Canadian Wheat Board on the future capacity of western Canada's grain producing aspects—what are they going to be able to produce? I quote from *The Globe and Mail* on this. "There is going to be a symposium in which our object will be to assess the current productive capacity of the prairies in grains and oil seeds."

It would be premature for us immediately to introduce a motion like this which guarantees a floor price without having the benefit of what this symposium is going to bring to us. What they are also going to be looking at is how we can reach our projection of 30 million tonnes by 1985 and 36 million by 1990. How can we increase exports to those levels? These are the targets that have been set in the Booze-Allen study. How can we identify a necessary strategy for short and long-term action to ensure that these production targets are met?

We recognize that we have problems in the area of transportation. The minister brought these to our attention. I am happy to say that we are doing something about it. Maybe some of this policy has been targeted as being double tracking. We call it upgrading of existing rail facilities to help that export. We are also dealing with the procurement of a number of new hopper cars. There are 2,000 new cars that have recently been put in service by the Canadian Wheat Board. Another 650 have been leased for the year by the Manitoba government. There are outstanding orders for 1,000 from Alberta and Saskatchewan. These will bring to 16,000 the number of available cars.

Mr. Knowles: Go back to the first part of your speech. It was the best part.

Mr. Peterson: This is a part that I took from an old speech that was given by you, good sir, in this House a long time ago. It came from somewhere anyway, some source of which I am equally proud if it did not come from you. It was certainly post-depression in terms of the quality of debate that has been going on in this House.

Let me conclude. While all of us support this type of thrust, let us proceed to do the further studying that is necessary. Let us proceed with the symposium that is coming up, which can help us assess our real needs. Let us realize the differences that are taking place in the international community. Let us recognize the needs that we are going to have to meet in helping other people become self-sufficient as well.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Peterson: I would be happy to have a question from members opposite. I would be happy to have the support of my colleagues in continuing what I think is a very important debate in this House this afternoon.

In conclusion, let me say I have appreciated the opportunity of listening to the remarks of hon. members opposite. I hope that the spirit of this bill will always be before this House as we are considering important issues of this nature.