

Canadian Wheat Board Act

I would like the Minister to explain how it is better for western grain producers to lose the two-price wheat system. Does that mean that the Government will make up that \$260 million? If so, does that not fly in the face of the so-called agreement? Will the Americans not accuse us of unfair subsidies and take the appropriate action?

I do not think we are getting the whole story. I have just cited three examples of this. The soft fruit industry and a whole slew of other industries in western Canada will, I submit, be victimized as well.

Let me return to the Canadian Wheat Board and its welfare and good order. If there were ever a time to be strengthening the Canadian Wheat Board, that time would be now.

I do not suppose that it makes a lot of difference whether the Wheat Board borrows money from a Canadian bank or from a bank in Switzerland, as long as the federal Government guarantees the loan. It is immaterial whether we get taken by domestic bankers or by international bankers. If the federal Government is guaranteeing it and we get taken again on the foreign exchange markets, at least Canadian grain producers will not get stuck for the losses. As far as I am concerned, as long as the Government guarantee is there, where it borrows money is immaterial. As far as I can tell from the Bill, at least the Minister is not weakening that protection for western grain producers.

I would like to ask the Minister or one of his colleagues to answer the points I have raised. My colleague from Prince Albert and I would like to have a full explanation as to how the costs are shared. One of the principles under which the Canadian Wheat Board functions, the principle that underlies the Wheat Board and other similar agencies, is orderly marketing. Farmers pool their products and resources and share in the benefits. They share in the costs and they share relatively equally. I know the system is not perfect, but whatever happened to that basic fundamental principle, the *raison d'être* for the Canadian Wheat Board, orderly marketing?

If we are to allow a few producers to escape some of the costs by using producer cars, surely that is unfair to all the other producers. Surely it helps undermine for the umpteenth time something which was started by the present Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle—Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) when he threw feed grains on the open market. The price has never been good since.

I would like government Members to explain why they would want to resort to any kind of weakening or potential weakening of the Canadian Wheat Board through which farmers pool their products. The board is an agent which acts on their behalf in both domestic and export sales and the producers share the benefits and the costs. Whatever happened to that?

Let us not just pander to a minority of interests who think that somehow or other, they will be able to save some money

or take advantage of a neighbour by getting a producer car. I hope that either in the House at second reading or in committee we will get full, complete and frank answers to the questions we have raised about why the amendments concerning producer cars had to be brought in.

● (1640)

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, let me make just a brief comment in response to some of the questions the Hon. Member raised in his speech.

If the Hon. Member lived on a farm in Saskatchewan and farmed, which he does not, he and his neighbours would be producing some of the highest if not the highest quality product in the world.

Mr. Benjamin: Tell me something I did not already know.

Mr. Mayer: His province produces probably the best quality durum, used for pasta, and milling wheat in the world. In that part of Canada we also produce some of the highest quality oil seeds in the world.

Mr. Benjamin: I know that. What has that got to do with the questions I raised?

Mr. Mayer: The Hon. Member asked about the opportunity in the U.S. market. We have an opportunity to take advantage of that market. I do not understand the Hon. Member being against people in his province having a chance to show the rest of the world the high quality products they produce.

To make the point of how good we are in what we do in agriculture, and what this opportunity of selling across the line in the U.S. can do for us let me say that about a month ago the American Health Institute named a product called Puriton Oil the health food product of the year. For the Hon. Member's information, that product was made from 100 per cent Canadian Canola oil. That tells you something about the quality of the product we produce. It also indicates the type of marketing opportunity there is in the U.S.

The trade arrangement worked out between Canada and the U.S. allows us to take advantage of that market because of the high quality products we produce.

Mr. Benjamin: Nothing new about that. We have always had that.

Mr. Mayer: You are asking me to explain some of the advantages and I am giving you that explanation. The Hon. Member might also remember, and the Member for Prince Alberta (Mr. Hovdebo) made reference to this, that the U.S. produces roughly four times as much wheat as Canada. We produce about 20 million tonnes, and the U.S. produces 80 million tonnes. They buy virtually no wheat from us. Given that fact and the fact that the U.S. exports twice as much wheat as we do, why would they buy any wheat from Canada at all? North Dakota is right across the border from both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Montana is as well. Why would