

problem once or twice that questions were not specifically taken as notice.

However, as far as my office is concerned, I believe we are reasonably well up to date, having responded to 98 per cent or 99 per cent, and, after today, it may even be 100 per cent.

● (1125)

### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

#### PROPOSED CHANGES IN QUOTA SYSTEM

**Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. I understand that he is contemplating changing the system of quota delivery of grains to make it possible for improved cash flow for small- and medium-size farmers.

I have been out of the country for the last few weeks and have not heard any details of this proposal. I wonder whether the minister might expound a little on what could be a very good idea?

**Hon. Hazen Argue (Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board):** Honourable senators, the quotas are established by the Canadian Wheat Board under its authority. Therefore, the Canadian Wheat Board has the prerogative to make any changes in the quota system. There is an advisory committee to the board which has a subcommittee that from time to time deals with the system of quotas that is to be established.

It is correct, however, that recently, at meetings in western Canada, particularly before the various wheat pool organizations, I did extend for discussion purposes an idea that there should be built into the quota system, a system of proportionately larger quotas for the smaller and medium-size farmers. Two or three statistics will indicate what I have in mind.

I suggested that for farmers with up to 500 acres the quota acreage should be increased by 50 per cent in each quota, and that for farmers with between 500 and 1,000 acres it should be increased by 25 per cent. Fifty per cent of all permit-book holders have 500 acres or less; 84.3 per cent of all permit-book holders have 1,000 acres or less. Therefore, modifying the quota system, if it should be done by that amount, would make it possible for the smaller and average-size producers to bring their grain to market more quickly, in a proportionate way, than the rather large farmers. This would have the advantage of increasing cash flow. I think it would be particularly helpful to the smaller farmers in terms of cash advances, which could then apply to a larger number of bushels of grain that would flow relatively more quickly into the market.

If our agricultural industry had a small carry-over of grain at the end of July, then I think that the smaller and medium-size farmers would have sold their grain and that this carry-over would be in the hands of the larger farmers, who are perhaps better able to handle a modest carry-over. If the Wheat Board were able to accept virtually all of the grain offered, as was really the case last year, then of course the farmer, large or small, would be able to clean out his bins at the end of the year, but the suggested change would still have

had the advantage of the smaller and average-size farmer having been able to bring his grain to market a little more rapidly, with a better cash flow, earlier in the crop year.

As I have said, honourable senators, the establishment of quotas is not within my jurisdiction. The idea has been put forward for discussion. I think that producers are looking for ways in which to increase the cash flow for the smaller and average-size farmer. I am sure that, if the producers are in general agreement with this idea, then the Wheat Board will take it into consideration when it is establishing its quota system.

### REQUEST FOR ANSWERS

**Hon. Robert Muir:** Honourable senators, because it is St. Andrew's Day and I am in a very generous mood, I hesitate to distress the Leader of the Government in the Senate—that great contortionist who is always prepared to break both arms in patting his own back with respect to answering questions. On November 17, however, I asked a question of the honourable gentleman regarding compensation for the wrongful imprisonment of Donald Marshall. Although we have read many reports and heard many different things on this subject, the minister has not brought forward a response to my question.

On the same day, I asked the minister a question regarding the possible closing of certain CBC television stations. I am happy to say that he has responded to that question, although later in the day another question I posed with regard to agriculture in New Brunswick he took as notice. Further, I pursued the question of the appointment of members to the board of directors of the Cape Breton Development Corporation. Those are just a few small items. I am sure that the Leader of the Government, if he has an opportunity, will be glad to forward me the information by letter. Perhaps it would be convenient for him to deliver the letter to my office at approximately 4 p.m. this afternoon.

● (1130)

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, if by 4 p.m. today I have answers that are satisfactory to the honourable senator, I will forward them to him then. If not, then obviously the answers will reach him somewhat later. There is a subtle difference between an answer that is satisfactory to the honourable senator and a reply. I believe that I have replied to all of those questions, with the exception of the one relating to the problem concerning Mr. Marshall. In that connection, I have forwarded a request, and as soon as a reply is received I will convey it to the honourable senator, whether or not the Senate is sitting.

**Senator Muir:** I thank the Leader of the Government for his reply. However, I am a little confused—which is not unusual for me—regarding his response concerning a satisfactory reply. I did not say that I had not received a satisfactory reply, but only that I had not received any reply to questions which the Leader of the Government said he was taking note of.