

Feed Grains

Then, they refer to differences in prices for grains between western and eastern breeders, still in the same report. The New Democrats and the Progressive Conservatives must have read it; I am surprised to find out tonight that, really, the western members do not realize better the problems of Quebec after reading such a report. On page 5, one can read the following:

The powers of the Canadian Wheat Board enable it to control any grain movement for export or even between the western provinces and the remainder of the country. It is authorized to control the import of feed grains from other countries, except corn grain. Moreover, as regards this grain, the board, through pressures, changes its entry into the country.

There is the problem and I think that it is time for this government to act and express itself frankly on this matter. And this is why they say: Can you make any concrete proposals? Upon reading this report, we find out that eastern farmers are making concrete proposals to the government.

Here are the first proposals:

1. The Canadian Wheat Board will be the feed grain selling agency on the domestic market outside the designated area.
 2. The assistance to feed grain transportation is part and parcel of Canada's feed marketing system.
 3. The price of feed grain on Canada's interprovincial market should be determined on the basis of the FAIR formula . . . providing all Canada's grain producers are on equal terms.
 4. Feed grain marketing committees and board in the different provinces, in agreement with the Canadian Wheat Board as well as the Canadian Feed Board should compile and publish weekly statistics concerning outside-of-the-board grain prices and trends.
 5. Initial prices . . . in the case of wheat, barley and oats should reflect the cost of production.
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6. Any policy intended to improve grain prices in a reasonable way in the Prairie provinces will be accepted by Quebec providing eastern growers are always on equal terms.
 7. The right to grant feed importation permits should be shifted from the Canadian Wheat Board to the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.
 8. Encouragement to any process that would minimize Prairie feed transportation costs to the consumer's areas.
 9. A study should be undertaken on the future role of the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange.

Such are the proposals from eastern farmers.

Yesterday I received a letter. Mr. Speaker, if I have enough time left, I should like to read it into the record to be published in *Hansard* so that the ministers can read it. It is dated July 13, 1973 and reads as follows:

Dear Sir:

The annual convention of the UPA Federation of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean set up as priority for 1972-73 the solution of the problem dealing with the cost of feed grains for producers from eastern Canada.

The same priority was given to the provincial UPA by the Quebec producers at the general annual UPA convention.

The UPA was asking for a fair policy regarding the price of feed grains paid by eastern producers and the one paid by western producers. It also recognized that such fair play could be possible by paying a differential for the transportation and handling of grain purchased in the east but coming from the west, in balance with the transportation and handling of stock shipped from western to eastern provinces.

Of course, the UPA asked that the grain freight assistance policy be maintained.

[Mr. Gauthier (Roberval).]

This policy is favoured by all producers of the province and particularly by the producers of our region, where the imbalances of grain prices is felt more due to the natural limitations of the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean to produce its own grains and especially certain classes of grain. The producer of the region is thus doubly preoccupied by this question of grain prices, and particularly those who have specialized themselves in certain types of production.

The board of directors of the UPA of the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, aware that a decision will shortly be taken by the federal government on a grain policy for eastern Canada, urges you to support the policy of the UPA concerning this question, expecting that you shall use all your influence so that this policy be adopted.

The question of grain prices in eastern Canada has been raised for a number of years and it must be solved shortly in terms of the future of agriculture in eastern Canada and our region in particular. The UPA of Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean is therefore expecting that you shall support it as best you can and assures you of its consideration.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what the people of my region want and what the farmers and producers of the province of Quebec want. They do not ask that people in western Canada be not guaranteed a certain income; they want a fair market, they want to see the same protection given to the people in the west also given to those in the east, and we must admit that it is only fair and reasonable.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, this debate will not defeat any Liberals nor will it gain any Liberal seats in the province of Quebec. However, it is a very important debate. It is time the Liberal Party looked at what is happening in Quebec and Ontario, particularly northern Ontario, with regard to feed grains. Most members believe in the Wheat Board operating as an agency to sell western grain both domestically and internationally. With few exceptions most people in this country agree with that. The reason for the exceptions is that we have as poor a minister as possible administering the act. This is because of his lack of knowledge on agriculture.

The Wheat Board has done a very good job of stabilizing prices for western farmers and providing equality, which is probably more important than prices. We all know the difficulties that have occurred in the past few years. Farmers in western Canada had to sell to the former premier of Saskatchewan wheat and furniture, which he in turn traded in for other goods. We all remember what took place. The Liberals are not above making a few bucks on that type of operation. If the present Premier of Saskatchewan asked the minister responsible for the Wheat Board to delay making any kind of statement until they had an opportunity to get some input, he would be wrong and would be doing a disservice to Canada and to the Wheat Board.

There is going to be a change in the operation of the feed grain agency in eastern Canada. The agency will have to play a new role. I hope it will provide enough feed grain in eastern Canada to meet the need, at a price that is fair and reasonable to Canadian farmers. I do not suggest that the agency do anything but buy in western Canada from the Wheat Board, the same as other agencies, on the grain exchange. The price the eastern feed grain agency pays should be exactly the same as that paid by other customers buying from the Wheat Board, whether it be on the international market, the domestic market in general or the eastern feed grain market. Who is screwing the farmer in