

Wheat Sales

Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) or any other Liberal over there who paid lip service to the concept and principle of orderly marketing of grain under the Canadian Wheat Board? The minister is going to send out questionnaires, take more surveys and, learn the reasons hopefully, for not having them under the Canadian Wheat Board. There is not a word of complaint from the Tories and not a word of complaint from the Liberals. I think the gentlemen in those two old-line parties can reasonably rely on the opponents of the Canadian Wheat Board to present their case. We have a right to know the policy of the Liberal Party on this.

Mr. Whelan: We are for democracy.

Mr. Benjamin: What is the policy of the Conservative Party? Mr. Speaker, these people are like Mackenzie King who said, "Conscription if necessary, but not necessarily conscription." I will change that to, "Flax, rye and rape-seed under the Canadian Wheat Board if necessary, but not necessarily under the Canadian Wheat Board."

Mr. Whelan: They will come under the board if the producers want it.

Mr. Benjamin: The government is running around trying to be half pregnant. Why is there this delay? Why did the Tories not say in their motion that these grains should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board? If they had done that, they might have seen a different ball game around here tonight.

Mention was made of the two-price system, so called. I recall the months of debate on the grain stabilization bill and the four conditions that the New Democratic Party said should be met before that bill could pass. First, benefits should be related to net income rather than gross income and, second, if PFAA were done away with it should be replaced with much more input by the federal government into crop insurance. Third, the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, if it were to be repealed, was to be replaced by government legislation which would do a more thorough job in maintaining a pantry of grain in Canada, and that the nation as a whole should pay the cost of that storage. Fourth, the two-price system was to apply to all six grains.

Then we came to October, 1971. There was a by-election in Assiniboia and four farmers took the then minister of finance to court. And who was it who got up in this House and said that he and his supporters would no longer oppose or delay that bill? It was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). The Conservative Party cut and run; it chickened out. We will haunt them with that for many more years to come, Mr. Speaker. Despite the chagrin and embarrassment of prairie members of the Conservative Party, the party as a whole cut and run.

The minister in charge of the Wheat Board then said, "I had better do something quickly to make sure the farmers are not so angry at the Liberals." I will give him full marks; he did not remain completely stubborn. He provided substantial additional amounts of money for the crop insurance program, which meant a substantial reduction in the premiums of the average Canadian farmer. The bill to amend the Crop Insurance Act that the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) mentioned this afternoon would

[Mr. Benjamin.]

never see the light of day around here if the Tories had their way, because the government would be defeated tonight. But they are the ones who protest that they want that bill to pass quickly. At the same time, they want parliament to be dissolved tonight. Again the official opposition wants it both ways.

One of the four conditions put forward in 1970-71 was adopted. Then the government came along with a so-called two-price system, which has nothing to do with a real two-price system. As my friend for Assiniboia said, it does not remotely resemble a two-price system but bastardizes the whole principle of the two-price system. The minister used the formula for the two-price system in order to arrive at an amount of money he could push through cabinet and Treasury Board and use to pay out on the basis of acres. What a payment per acre has to do with the price per bushel I have yet to hear from the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. We still put forward the proposition that there should be a two-price system, and if the official opposition in its motion had included the two-price system for all six grains, I for one would have voted in favour of their motion tonight. If it is logical for the government to adopt as policy a two-price system for wheat domestically consumed, I suggest it is equally logical to do the same with the other five grains. We are waiting for that to be done.

Mention was made of Operation Lift. I will not say much about it because the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) says he hates people who say, "I told you so." If members of the government and the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board want to hate me, I am sorry; but I must say, "I told you so." Member after member in this House, including members of the Liberal Party, warned the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and the government about implementing that program. We said, "So what, if we have one billion bushels of grain? It is like money in the bank. It is food for the world and a grain pantry for Canada. It will only take one average or poor crop, and increased sales, and in 15 months we could run out of grain." And that idiot tried to buy off the farmers with \$60 million, by persuading them to do an immoral act—to not grow food in a hungry world.

An hon. Member: What idiot?

Mr. Benjamin: Well, take your pick.

Mr. Alexander: On which side of the House?

Mr. Benjamin: On your side, too. If the official opposition really meant business and really had a farm policy—really I am reciting the NDP farm program—it would say in its motion that the nation as a whole should pay a share of the cost of grain storage with respect to all six grains. They could have included a clause in the motion providing for the repeal of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. But, Mr. Speaker, my friends to the right want us to bail them out again. They blew it, Mr. Speaker, and now they want me to rewrite their motion for them.

An hon. Member: Bail out the Conservative Party?

Mr. Benjamin: No way. When I look at what is on the government side and what is beside us, I am reminded