

Senator Murray should also take into account—and I believe this to be a fact—that the reduction undertaken by the United States was a reduction in the sale of feed grains into the Soviet Union, and what they called on Canada to do—and the Clark government went along with it—was to hold back our sales of wheat for human consumption.

The honourable senator may think there is no difference, but I really think there is. When you say to a country, “We are going to reduce the sales of grain for your livestock industry,” that is one thing, but when you say, “We are going to reduce the sales of grain for human consumption,” that is something else.

It may well have been the case that the embargo resulted in the U.S.S.R. exporting lesser quantities of grain to satellite nations, but I think the honourable senator should keep in mind that the Americans had no embargo on American sales to Poland. So if the holding back of Canadian grain to the Soviet Union resulted in the Soviet Union being able to supply less grain to Poland, the Americans would welcome that because their policy was to supply grain to Poland, which they did.

● (1530)

Just a little while ago the present American administration removed its restrictions on United States multinational companies taking grain to the Soviet Union. They said, “We have an embargo, but ships can go there.” If that is not an encouragement to “bootleg”, or whatever the right word would be, I do not know what is.

I think Senator Murray should also take into account the fact that the President-elect of the United States has said that he will not go along with this embargo, that he will remove it, and that there will be a new policy. The other day I saw a quote from Clayton Yeutter, who was the leading authority in the Reagan campaign, having to do with agricultural policy in which he said that when the Reagan administration takes office, it will remove the partial embargo to the Soviet Union. I believe Clayton Yeutter was the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture when Mr. Butz was Secretary of Agriculture.

I think it is in our interest, either today or in the near future, to remove these restrictions placed upon us with respect to the sale of grain to the Soviet Union, and to revert to our past pattern of providing quantities to that market at normal and traditional levels without any ceiling.

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, from the outstanding potato-growing area of Canada, I have a question about wheat, supplementary to the question asked by my colleague, Senator Murray.

I was in the House of Commons with the honourable minister when his political heroes were J. M. Woodsworth and M. J. Coldwell. Today he has venerated Mackenzie King, and I say, “What a decline into mediocrity,” but that is his business, and I do not make judgments.

I should like to ask the honourable minister if, in fact, the basic problem is that the government of the day—regrettably the government of the day—has been following the policies of

[Senator Argue.]

the government which it criticized, namely, supporting the American boycott, the burden of which, in the long run, was placed upon the backs of Canadian farmers, Canadian athletes and very few other Canadians. Does the minister not feel great resentment that the Yankee traders have made a deal with the Chinese with no regard for Canadians, and are playing games which are not incumbent upon a decent relationship between our two countries?

Senator Argue: We are concerned about the deal that was made between the Government of the United States and the Chinese government in this last grain arrangement of from 6 to 9 million tonnes. The agreement is that if the Chinese need a larger quantity of grain than 9 million tonnes, the United States will expect them to purchase it from the United States. If they have to go below the floor of 6 million tonnes, they will apportion the reduction among other exporting nations. That is a very disturbing matter as far as our relations with the United States are concerned. We are concerned about that particular agreement.

If I may revert for just a moment to our policy with regard to the embargo, I have taken a very strong lead position in having this policy changed. I have made recommendations to the Government of Canada, to the appropriate places that Senator Murray would expect, and I feel that my recommendations have met with every success, for which I am appreciative.

Senator Macquarrie: As a supplementary—and it is semi-smuggled—I want the minister to know that I am not one of his worst critics, because all his faults are usually not by intention. I recall that the man who knows more about the movement of western grain than anyone in Canada, the Honourable Alvin Hamilton, has said good words about this minister, and I listen to that. I would ask him to reflect upon the expression that Benjamin Franklin used many years ago, that perhaps on this international matter the Americans “diddled” us.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would ask the Leader of the Government if there are some delayed answers to questions which he could present at this time. If not, we can continue with questions. I ask this only because I know it is the intention of honourable senators to adjourn at approximately 4 o'clock.

Senator Frith: The Question Period belongs largely to the opposition, so perhaps we should hear what their feeling is in the matter. Would they prefer to proceed with further questions or move to delayed answers?

Senator Macquarrie: More questions.

ITALY

EARTHQUAKE DISASTER—SAFETY OF CANADIANS IN AREA

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, I have a very brief question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I asked him yesterday if he had any news concerning Canadians in the earthquake area of southern Italy. Can he give this information to the Senate today?