

be served. I have made it completely clear that the procedure which is being followed—

Mr. Southam: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in order to clarify the record and support the contentions raised in the point of order of my colleague, the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski), may I say that I had the honour and privilege, when leading off the debate one week ago last Monday on the bill with respect to the amendments to the Wheat Board Act, to support the principle that there should be a plebiscite to settle this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Perhaps at this time the Chair should take the opportunity of reminding hon. members that it is not the practice of this House to allow hon. members to intervene in the debate on points of order for the purpose of making explanations or corrections. The Chair is ready to allow hon. members to make clarifications. None the less, opportunities for clarification were given to all who participated in the debate. The minister now has the floor. I do not think hon. members should interrupt him regularly for the purpose of correcting statements or interpretations of statements.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, it is true, of course, that we should get nowhere if every hon. member rose to redeclare his position. It is useful to hear the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Southam) repeat the position he adopted in leading off the debate. I thought he took an eminently sensible position. I was surprised at the extent to which colleagues of his representing other ridings, and perhaps not as much associated with the agricultural community as he is, departed from that position in suggesting that the view of producers was well known and that they were so clearly against this measure that there was no point at all in consulting them. I invite him to check the record and confirm that many of his Conservative colleagues adopted that position.

Of course, I was saying that it had been my view that this is an area in which it is particularly up to the producers to decide. In order to examine this question fully I set up, over one year ago, a committee composed of two producers and a distinguished member of the Rapeseed Association. It was to examine the question of the marketing systems available for the oil seeds in particular, although rye is now included in the amendment to the bill. This committee, in analyzing the problem, reached the conclusion that the producers did not have at the present time sufficient information in their hands about the way the marketing systems operate to make a clear and responsible decision about this question. They suggested in their report that after more information was obtained and put in their hands, a plebiscite should be held. I indicated immediately that I agreed with their view that the producers deserve additional information to understand the system. Indeed, it was my view that the atmosphere has changed to some extent with regard to the marketing of these grains and that the producer organizations deserved a further opportunity to examine the marketing system.

Canadian Wheat Board Act

I asked the committee to continue its work on developing the necessary information and I hope that, before very long, the results of their labours will be available to the producers of this country. They will have in their hands a fully documented analysis of the present marketing system, problems relating to it and possible improvements to it, as well as a documentation of some of the alternatives which may be available if producers choose them. It was my view that, at that point, the views of the producers should be obtained. My only hesitation, as I pointed out at page 6021 of *Hansard* with regard to spelling out a plebiscite in the bill, was in relation to the question of voting rights in regard to such a plebiscite. I have a formula for the plebiscite which I suggested to the committee and which I should like to put before the House. In my view, no change should be made unless there is clear support on the part of producers for such a change. I said that particularly because these things, once done, cannot be easily undone. In that case a mere shadow of a feeling in favour of change may not be enough. The clear and substantial support of the producers is required.

In this area the question is complicated by such questions as, who is a producer? This must be asked in order to determine what form of plebiscite should take place. Is a producer one who produces for one year, or for two years or three years? Is some weight to be attached to the size of acreage in production of the respective producers? Again on this point, Mr. Speaker, I have a formula which gives some weight to the size of production and which gives some weight to the persistence of participation in the growing of rapeseed. This may be developed and then incorporated into the legislation itself. Certainly, it is some such form of consultation that I had in mind right along. I want necessary information to be available to producers which will allow them to understand.

I have been surprised by the heat of the debate regarding the pros and cons of the situation, since no information that is appropriate has really been set out. The arguments of hon. members tended to be, "Let's do it because the producers want it," or, "Let's not do it because producers do not want it." I suggest that that was not very helpful. The best decision, of course, would be one recognizing that some further discussion through farm organizations and across the prairie region is needed in the next number of months. Then, some further, final consultation with producers will need to be held to determine how many wish to continue the existing system and how many are against it. If their clearcut choice, made evident at that point, is for adopting a different system, we would do so. We would then be in a position to do so with the proper machinery required to protect their rights as producers and marketers of this grain. Since hon. members have supported the generality of the amendments in this bill, and since two prominent spokesmen for the Conservatives now repeat their view that such a plebiscite should be held, I welcome the support of all hon. members for these amendments to the Wheat Board Act and am pleased to move the second