

Canadian Wheat Board Act

provisions are not there. Of course a pooling system would not work if people were allowed to opt in or out on a yearly basis. I am a little concerned that we may see at some point in time, ten or 15 years from now, rapeseed totally under the authority of the pooling system or totally under the Canadian Wheat Board, and I do not think that would be the right direction to take.

The main concern I have about the bill is that it opens the door, however slightly, to a total marketing board concept. But be that as it may, at present what we have is, in my opinion, true freedom of choice. If I want to market my grain on the open market or through the Canadian Wheat Board, I can do that. The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom), if he were a farmer, could do that same thing. He could market through the Canadian Wheat Board if he so wanted. It is not going to hurt either one of us. That is the point that is missed so often by the socialists when they talk about free enterprise versus socialism, about freedom of choice being really one freedom, that is, the freedom of marketing in one particular way.

In my opinion we have the best of both worlds so far as the marketing system at present is concerned. In many respects it is better than the American marketing system. I do not think Canadians will ever get into the grains selling system that the Americans have with their three or four multinational corporations which sell grain on a world-wide basis because, frankly, we do not have the resources; it is too expensive a game for us to play. But I certainly feel that with the Wheat Board operating the way it is and having a parallel system which allows me personally, or anyone else, to sell in a different manner if we so wish, that is the kind of system that we in the House should strive to preserve with every piece of legislation we bring in because in my opinion—and I know this opinion is shared by a good many farmers across western Canada—that is the kind of system that will bring us the maximum benefit so far as grains and oil seeds which we sell in Canada are concerned.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Paproski: Here is another CPR farmer. He farms on CPR right of ways.

Mr. Benjamin:—I want to say a few words on third reading of this bill and to tell my friend, the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski), that as a CPR man—my father was one as well—I was born, lived, and raised and saw at first hand how farmers were treated by his free enterprise system and by the CPR. I worked on a section for a few weeks one summer.

Mr. Paproski: Have you learned to speak Ukrainian?

Mr. Benjamin: I did not learn how to speak Ukrainian, and that was a mistake I made. The issue here is pretty clear, I think. My colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom), and I have advocated that the best way for grain producers in Canada to compete on the world market is

[Mr. Murta.]

to co-operate and do it together; that a small percentage, or even a significant percentage of rapeseed producers in a voluntary pool would not count for very much faced with dealing with governments of other countries or in competition with the four or five big multinational grain trading corporations, because they would not have sufficient muscle. A voluntary pool, even operated by two or three grain companies, which took in even the majority of our rapeseed producers would still not be big enough to count.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) regretted that Canada does not have a large grain trader of the size of the big four. I want to dispute that; we do have a large grain-trader in the world markets that has some muscle. It is called the Canadian Wheat Board. It has the backing of the overwhelming majority of grain producers in western Canada and, more important than that, it has the backing of the people of Canada, of this parliament, and of the government. In other words, the resources of this nation are behind the Wheat Board if ever needed. This gives us a grain trader that has the size and the muscle to count in world markets.

This bill makes provision for rapeseed. Canada's share in the market, so far as oil seed production is concerned, is minuscule—it is somewhere around 7 per cent—because we must compete with other oil seeds such as soybeans, peanuts, sunflower and coconut oil, and whatever amount of rapeseed we are going to export, or any other oil seed, requires a large, competent organization that has trading and financial muscle to compete in world markets. To suggest that a small percentage, or even a large percentage, of rapeseed growers in a pool with one or more grain companies can do that, I submit, is just dreaming.

We already have a large grain trader. The best way in which grain producers in western Canada can get the maximum value from their production is in a co-operative system of orderly marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board. In fact it is the feeling, certainly in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, in the National Farmers' Union and, I suspect, also in the Alberta and Manitoba pools, that since they already have an organization capable of doing that kind of marketing, we should not duplicate it by setting up additional pooling arrangements, voluntary or otherwise.

The Canadian Wheat Board has the expertise and the experience. It has offices all around the world. It is close to the farmers, it is accountable to the grain producers, to parliament, and to the government. The grain producers' interests are fully protected and guarded in many ways, and the grain producers in western Canada have said repeatedly for 40 or 50 years that they have exercised the freedom of choice that the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) speaks about, which is orderly marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board. It is the logical, obvious, and proper vehicle through which to market all the grains produced in western Canada. I would even suggest that its name be changed to the Canadian grains board so that it would reflect more properly its duties and its terms of reference.