

Wheat Sales

the whole structure of the grain industry has improved because of the operation of the Wheat Board, which has been made possible because of the facilities made available to it. I am referring of course not only to the operation of the Wheat Board, but to the Wheat Board Marketing Committee which was set up. Indeed, there is interest in the further study and development of this area.

The improvement in the operation of our whole grain industry is noticeable and very distinct today, when one compares it with the operation of several years ago. I think that is the general view. I am glad that it is still the general view that the Wheat Board is a useful and important instrument and one that we ought to defend. I trust that in future, when hon. members attack the judgment shown by the Wheat Board in selling, they will recognize that they are attacking the Wheat Board itself.

● (1620)

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It relates to the minister's introductory remarks. I did not want to interrupt the minister, but he said, and it will be recorded in *Hansard*, that this party is against the Wheat Board and imputed motives. I remind the minister that when Mr. Bennett was Prime Minister, our party created the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It is very difficult for the Chair to accept the point. The hon. member should have raised it when the minister made the statement, not after he completed his speech. I presume the only way the hon. member would be permitted to do that now would be to make his own speech and put forward his opinion of the minister's speech during this debate.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I said that was the rule. I have always tried to be courteous. I did not want to interrupt the minister when he was speaking. It would be against the rules to say that the minister deliberately misrepresented the facts, but he certainly misrepresented the facts this afternoon. As a member from western Canada, I have a right to correct the minister when he does not present the correct facts.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, we have had this exchange many times, and no doubt will have it many more times. I recognize the legislative steps which were taken when the Conservatives were in power and their complete lack of effectiveness until the Liberal government gave the Wheat Board some proper responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: The whole point of my remarks was that most of the Conservative spokesmen from the Prairies know better than to come out plainly and openly state their position. Some do, but others do it in indirect ways, such as the motion now before us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The remarks expressed following the point of order prove to the Chair and, I am sure, to hon. members, that this is not a point of order and we should not pursue the matter.

[Mr. Lang.]

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, in his address to this chamber, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) pointed out that this is the first debate on agriculture and it had finally been initiated by the opposition. That is true. The reason is that the minister has in the wings at least two very important policies which he has not had the courage to bring before this House, despite repeated requests.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) does not think it is worth his time to be in the House this afternoon. The people who are running agriculture and directing the affairs of farmers in this country are a cash crop farmer from Ontario and a one-time Dean of Law from Saskatchewan. Neither minister has the courage to bring in legislation dealing with feed grains, despite requests I have made to the Minister of Justice in this House and to the Minister of Agriculture in committee. I finally pinned down the Minister of Agriculture and he said if there is any legislation, he will introduce it. The government stated it would introduce new policies with regard to the marketing of feed grains in Canada before August 1. We are well into the last half of the month of June. There is only July ahead of us. The government is afraid to tell the farmers what it is going to do.

I would not have bothered to initiate a debate on the subject which the official opposition has chosen to bring before us this afternoon. The motion attacks the minister in charge of the wheat board. That is not hard to do. He has made some monumental blunders. We have had the Lift program which deprived us of the possibility of having a large amount of grain in storage at this time. The grain stabilization program which the minister proposed would have knocked out our grain storage program if the minister had had his way. I do not blame the opposition for sounding off at the minister, but I cannot understand why in their motion they condemn the minister for, and I quote:

—failing to permit the Board to operate in a positive and efficient manner in the best interest of the Canadian wheat farmer;

They also deplore the government's failure to announce through the board an immediate payment of 30 cents a bushel. I have not received any letters from farmers indicating that they want an interim payment at this time. My impression is that they are willing to wait for the final payment. I have not received any letters from farmers indicating that the Wheat Board should be discontinued or that its operations are inefficient. Neither the Canadian Federation of Agriculture nor the National Farmers Union has told me to get on my horse and do something about an inefficient wheat board. I do not know why this suggestion should be the basis for a debate in this House.

I have checked a few figures. Last year, the Canadian Wheat Board operated the wheat pool at a cost of 1.024 cents per bushel. The figure for oats was .8119 per bushel and barley .9541 per bushel. This was the actual cost to the farmer for administrative charges. The total carrying charges for wheat in 1971-72, and I believe that was a partial year, were 8.326 cents per bushel. Under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, there was a contribution of 5.05 cents per bushel. Therefore, the actual carrying charges for the operation indicate that it was very effi-