

*Canadian Wheat Board Act*

In that case, unless he is very careful, he will be unable to assure Russia, China, or Japan, which is buying in volume, that we will be able to make such deliveries.

This is the difficulty foreseen by the farmers in marketing their crops. I think we need a clear cut statement from the minister assuring us he is going to make every attempt, before the end of this crop year, to fill up all available commercial storage. If he puts forward the argument that by following this course difficulties will be created in the throughput of the grain handling system, that argument will not stand up. We have had our commercial storage facilities filled before. In various crop years in the past we have delivered huge amounts of grain to Russia and China during periods of near capacity grain storage in our commercial facilities, and there has been no difficulty with the throughput.

I submit that the first purpose of this legislation is to eliminate the operator of the small farm. The government thinks that the large scale farmer will then be able to look after himself and there will be less load on the government. The second purpose is to reduce government spending on agriculture. The government must have commercial storage either empty or practically empty so that it does not become involved in any major expenditure. Thirdly, the government wants to create a situation where it knows exactly what is being produced by any and all of the farmers. The government wants more control.

In a speech I made earlier in this House, on the subject of agriculture I said that what the government wanted was power, that the government wants to control every facet of our society, that the government is power hungry. It is not just content with being in office; the government wants power to control every facet of our society. That is what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) wanted when he introduced his marketing bill, though I do not think he wants it any more. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board is searching for power. He is trying to build up an empire for himself so as to control and to manipulate agricultural products. Instead of letting the Wheat Board run its own business, directions will be given from Ottawa. Instead of bringing in a bill to allow the farmer to have some representation on the Wheat Board, there is to be more rigidity in the system.

• (4:10 p.m.)

If one carefully studied the agricultural situation during the past number of years, one would realize that the most successful farmer has been the farmer who has been most flexible, who has been able to shift his energy from one phase of the industry to another and therefore meet the market as it develops. The rigidity this government is bringing to the agricultural scene is wrong. It will prohibit the flexibility required in an individual farmer's operation. In my opinion, the whole concept goes back to the question of supply management. This government is firmly committed to supply management. The Operation Lift which the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board brought in last year was a direct

[Mr. Horner.]

attempt at supply management. Now, the minister throws out his chest and says that it was pretty successful because the amount of wheat was reduced. Yes, he reduced the amount of wheat because he introduced a program whereby if a farmer did seed wheat he could not deliver it. That was the way the quota system worked.

Canada is a small country in population but a country which is large in resources and ability. For a long time the farmers have listened to the government experts, the bureaucrats, say that greater efficiency is required in the agricultural industry. The farmers need more effectiveness from the government rather than greater efficiency. Now, the minister states that supply management will give this. Canada is a country which has the ability to produce something in the neighbourhood of less than 10 per cent of the world's wheat production and yet it has nearly 50 per cent of the world's surplus. We need sales. If we say we cannot sell it then, in effect, we are saying that all the people in the world go to bed with no more desire to have a greater supply of food. We all know this is wrong. We know there are many people throughout the world who require more food. To me, the concept of supply management is an example of negative thinking. We are opting out of competition throughout the world. We should be doing the direct opposite.

The Canadian Wheat Board should be adopting a system of selling agencies or if the Canadian Wheat Board does not wish to do this the government should do so. I asked the former chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board about this and he said he felt the board should be involved in a pricing, pooling and orderly marketing system. However, he would prefer not to have selling agencies under the board because the board must be impartial and must treat all the various selling agencies alike. If that is the opinion of the board, then the Canadian government should be giving financial assistance to the newly established selling agencies which the pools and the UGG have formed and which it is hoped will play an active part in the selling world. This government has not mentioned anything about this. There are many things which could be done which would be far more effective in helping the farmer than the three pieces of legislation the minister has brought in. Each piece of legislation creates more and more difficulty for the farmer in his attempt to remain in business.

The Canadian Wheat Board has been one of the major tools in assisting the farmer in respect of marketing his grain in the past number of years. However, the system should be changed. It should be made more flexible. The Canadian Wheat Board should be made more of a market-oriented board for Canada rather than a board which just controls the amount of grain produced by the farmers. Another thing I should like to mention is that in respect of the pricing system of the Canadian Wheat Board there should also be some changes. Last fall, because of the inflexibility of the Canadian Wheat Board we saw a situation in which Canadian barley sold at least 20 cents a bushel less than it should have for over a period of nearly two months. Because of the corn blight