

Canadian Wheat Board Act

Mr. Mayer: It is called the Western Wheat Growers.

Mr. Benjamin: It is the same difference. It is the same breed of cat. They are the ones who have always opposed orderly marketing, always opposed the Wheat Board, but I suspect it is the result of political pressure from the Conservative Party and outfits like the Western Wheat Growers the barley growers and the flax growers, all of which have 200, 300 or 400 members, while the wishes of the wheat pools with something like 140,000 members get overlooked. Any kind of a thing that will convenience the so-called free and open market forces of the friends of the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board seems to get an inordinate amount of attention, disproportionately, from what the overwhelming majority of grain producers want. I know the Minister always has maintained, and does not take a back seat to anybody today, his support of the Canadian Wheat Board and orderly marketing, et cetera, et cetera. When I look at some of the friends the Minister has in the agricultural movement, in the grain industry—

Miss Carney: He has lots of them.

Mr. Benjamin: When I look at the friends the Minister has and some of the outfits that support his Party, I cannot help but be a little suspicious.

Mr. Mayer: Talk to my neighbours.

Mr. Benjamin: I do not think it is paranoia, Mr. Speaker. I cannot help but be suspicious.

Miss Carney: It is Christmas!

Mr. Benjamin: The Hon. Minister, who is such a great protector of orderly marketing, the Canadian Wheat Board and grain producers, along with his colleagues, is telling us that grain producers will benefit a great deal under the free trade agreement. It will be nothing but another heaven on earth for the grain producers. It will be just like getting rid of the Crow rate. I believe you too, Mr. Speaker, were somewhat involved in that fracas. Anyone who tells the people that he is a true blue representative of western Canada will have to explain to me and to a lot of grain producers as well as the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and CSP Foods what is so beneficial about losing the benefits of the Western Grain Transportation Act on the movement of rapeseed meal, grain pellets and grain screenings to the United States and having to pay the full commercial freight rate. I would like the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board as well as the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) to tell us how it will be better for western farmers if the freight rate for their grain screenings, Canola meal, alfalfa pellets or any products used for animal feeds in the United States is to be higher. I know that the farmers would be interested to hear that.

• (1630)

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like, with the indulgence of the House, to offer to go through it

and explain it to him. The Hon. Member has asked for an explanation. I would be more than happy to provide it for him if he is agreeable and if there is unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Belsher): That is not a point of order, Sir.

Mr. Benjamin: When I am through, the Minister can rise to answer all these questions and I will be happy to listen. He has our consent to speak again.

I would also like to know how it will be better if American agricultural producers can send any of their grains into western Canada with or without a Wheat Board licence. I do not understand that. I am just an innocent, stubble-jumping prairie boy, and I do not understand it. Since we are up to here in all these grains, how would it be beneficial to western grain producers for Americans to move their grain, particularly cereals, into western Canada?

Considering the amount of subsidies for those American grains, I would like to know from the Minister, regardless of the free trade agreement, not if but when the Americans start moving those specialty crops into western Canada, will the Minister and the Government of the day, the present one with which we are stuck, be prepared to levy our own countervail or tariffs on any subsidized grain from the U.S. that moves into western Canada with or without the Canadian Wheat Board? The grain producers of western Canada would like an explanation. How is it better for western grain producers from an area of Canada that cannot get rid of all the grain it has for the Americans to sell grain in western Canada? I need an explanation for that as do about 150,000 grain producers.

We are told that the free trade agreement gets rid of the two-price system. There are two explanations we would like on this matter. On the one hand, Americans will countervail, slap on tariffs or duties or place embargoes if they feel that we are charging ourselves less than we are charging them. With international trading habits these days, that is the normal practice. One country thinks another is dumping and charging itself less than it is charging for exports, so it hits the other country with a tariff, a countervail, an embargo or an excise tax. There are lots of ways to do it.

On the other hand, when we charge ourselves more for the grain we consume in Canada than for the grain we have exported, the Americans do not like that either. If we charge ourselves less, that is a subsidy. If we charge ourselves more, that is no good either.

The Canadian Wheat Board will have to live with the results of these negotiations. Why then did it accept the elimination of the two-price grain system under which we charge ourselves more for grain used for human consumption in Canada than we charge for grain sold abroad? That is the exact opposite of the normal practices of exporting countries. That means \$260 million to grain producers.