

flour. Researchers in Canada are working with their limited budgets and limited time on the advice of some of the Wheat Board staff to produce some soft, white wheats; they spend a great deal of time on this. The producers are encouraged by this because these varieties of wheat have a larger yield than the hard spring wheats. They are easier to produce and if allowed to be grown, the result may be an increased income for these farmers.

It seems to me that this is an ideal example of a situation in which the advisory board, if it were composed of producers, could advise the Wheat Board that the farmers in their area would like to produce this type of wheat. Of course, farmers are always interested in maximizing their incomes, and it would be to their advantage to have as their advisor a producer in the area who can go to the Wheat Board and recommend that they encourage the research staff in our country to continue research into these extra varieties and encourage the Department of Agriculture to give researchers the necessary funds to continue this research.

These are just a few examples which explain why I feel the hon. member for Moose Jaw has brought forward an excellent amendment which I feel the minister himself has agreed on a number of occasions would improve this bill. I think, as a member representing a great number of grain farmers in the Wheat Board area, that these farmers would support this amendment wholeheartedly. Therefore, I commend it to all members of the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Bussi eres (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, my remarks on the comments that have been made will be very brief. First of all, I want to say that all hon. members who sit on the agriculture committee, even if they are not from a region affected by the act, are still very much interested by the proceedings of the committee and try to keep informed as well as possible of the work that is being done there and to make the most objective contribution possible.

Concerning the amendment proposed and discussed in committee, the comments made both by the members of the committee and by the minister during his appearances before the committee were in favour of not limiting the eligibility for membership. That was the basic argument put forward and I think it did not create any opposition or misunderstanding among the Liberal members of the committee. The answer given by witnesses and the purpose of the amendment were well understood. However, it was thought that by limiting the range of candidates, the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board would be deprived of candidates who would have been very useful because of their experience and their knowledge in the field. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, those were the only comments I had to make.

[English]

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words on the amendment of the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil). On the surface, it looks like an excellent amendment, almost like motherhood. I know the hon. member for Moose Jaw is moving this amendment with the best of motives and intentions, and I accept that. However, I want to suggest that this kind of

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amendment suits very well the people who support and believe in the private grain trade, the so-called open market. The amendment will allow them to accomplish what they could not do in a democratic election, that is to get rid of people like Mr. E. K. Turner, the president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and Mr. Roy Atkins, the president of the Farmers' National Union, who were elected by the producers in their respective districts in a democratic vote. So, I am a little suspicious of what this amendment is trying to accomplish.

Another objection I have is that this amendment would prevent a retired farmer from running for the advisory commission and it would prevent farmers' wives from running for the advisory commission. If a group of farmers in any district decided to pick a lawyer in the local town and nominate him as their candidate, it would prevent them from doing so.

If farmers want nothing but producers on the advisory board, they can vote only for producers. It is for them to decide, not for the hon. member for Moose Jaw, for me or the government. I think the qualifications for candidates who may be elected to the advisory committee should be broad enough so that the grain producers can nominate and vote for whomever they darn well wish; I see no point in trying to restrict the eligibility of people for election to the board. I think the producers themselves will make the decision regarding who they want to nominate and for whom they want to vote. I do not think we should prohibit anyone from running. Why prevent farmers from nominating a prominent, respected retired farmer in whom they all have great confidence? He is retired, he no longer holds a class A permit book. He might have a special delivery book to clean out a number of bills after he has retired, and that is it. If he happens to be the one whom they want to elect, it seems to me that grain producers in a region should have the right to do so.

So I think the hon. member's amendment does not really accomplish what he wants. In fact, it places more restrictions than I think he realizes. So I urge the House to defeat the amendment.

Mr. Neil: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the hon. member for Regina Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) would entertain a question. If he wishes to see qualifications broad enough to include retired farmers and others, would he be agreeable to permitting landlords who, say, are holders of suffix B permit books, to vote for these people, or would he restrict the eligibility strictly to producers?

Mr. Benjamin: I think I made that clear. I said that actual producers should have the right to nominate whom they wish to run for an election to the advisory commission, whether it is a suffix B permit holder, a retired farmer, the town lawyer or the town drunk—that is there business. It is up to them to decide for whom they are going to vote. I do not see any point in saying that only certain people can be nominated. What kind of democracy is that?