

At page 6625 of *Hansard* for May 6, 1970, the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Stewart) asked what producer groups were consulted before Operation Lift was established. The minister replied that the Alberta Wheat Pool, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Manitoba pool elevators, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the National Farmers Union had been consulted. The minister further stated:

All consulted expressed support for the final version of Operation Lift as a necessary inventory reduction program to place the western grains industry on a solid footing for long-term industry policies and programs.

When talking to these producer groups they told me that they were presented with a *fait accompli*. This was the program, and there were to be no changes. It was "take it or leave it." If this is going to be the case with these pieces of enabling legislation, there is certainly cause for fear and apprehension among many producers who feel very strongly about the matter, particularly the question of rapeseed coming under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. I ask the minister! If in the opinion of the government it is desirable to include these grains under the Wheat Board Act, will Parliament have an opportunity to deal with the matter? Will we have an opportunity to debate the proposal, or will it be invoked or introduced, as the hon. member for Mackenzie suggested, in the same manner as the War Measures Act?

The majority of producers are very concerned about the prospect of these grains being included. In fact, the prospect of inclusion has already had a detrimental effect on markets. The minister knows very well that rapeseed has provided one of the major cash crops in western Canada. Its growth has been phenomenal and its marketing program has been fantastic. In the past three years there has been a doubling of acreage and a doubling of production in each consecutive year. There have been no marketing problems. This is one of the few commodities produced in the western agricultural community that can readily be turned into cash. I might mention that cattle is another. These two commodities, rapeseed and cattle, have in large part been responsible for sustenance of the western farm economy during this time in which very serious problems confront the industry.

• (8:30 p.m.)

The measure before us gives the Governor in Council the option of bringing these grains, at will, under the government marketing agency. Of course, we know very well what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) would like to do with the cattle industry. He has not seen fit to bring in the appropriate amendment to exclude cattle. The desire for being included has spread to the hog industry as well. We know very well that these two commodities have been successful in the free market place and there has been no government interference. I believe the producers do not want government interference with these two commodities.

Certainly there have been problems in marketing, but not nearly the problems encountered with the marketing of grain under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. In many cases the decisions which are being made with

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respect to sales policy are not always those which relate to the economic considerations of the day. Rather, many of them are political decisions. We have enjoyed a fairly consistent market and the producers want no part of seeing rapeseed brought under the control of the Wheat Board.

This leads me to examine the minister's observations about the success of the efforts made to sell wheat. Introducing the bill, the hon. gentleman talked about the vigorous sales program in which the Wheat Board has been engaged, the resurgence of sales and the fantastic numbers of sales which have been made. It is clear to me that results have not been lived up to the optimistic forecasts which were contained, for example, in Outlook 1971 which indicated we would be marketing some 500 million bushels of wheat.

If we look at the mini-Outlook which is dated March, 1971, we find it stated that the continuation of the government's more competitive export policy in 1970-71 should result in sales of the order of 350 million to 400 million bushels. Taking the higher figure of 400 million bushels, we note there has been a drop in the projected sales target of 100 million bushels. I need only remind you, Mr. Speaker, that last year we marketed 347 million bushels, and before that 306 million bushels. So when you look at Canada's surplus in relation to the amount of publicity that is being created, you find that the increased sales are not really significant and, of course, the increase which has taken place has not resulted in any great financial benefit to the farmers.

The opposition has constantly reminded the minister that all is not well with our marketing performance. It is interesting to note that it is not only the opposition which has taken this view. It is widely circulated in the western farm papers that the great wheat selling job we were led to believe is going on, has not in fact taken place. I refer to page 6 of the *Free Press Weekly* dated May 15. It is not normally my habit to quote at length, but in this case I feel justified in doing so. This article, entitled "A big selling job ahead", is of particular interest because the minister has accused opposition members of belittling a gigantic selling effort. I appreciate the fact that the minister has tried. He has done a great deal on his personal initiative. What I object to is some of the false optimism which has been created by misleading propaganda statements. The article begins by asking a question:

Have the predictions of record exports of grain including wheat been substantiated by the first nine months of this crop year? The answer must be, no.

Mr. Lang: Would the hon. member permit a question? Can the hon. member show me where the minister, or anyone else on behalf of the government, predicted anything beyond a range of between 400 million bushels and some higher figure of bushels of wheat exported in the forecast 700 million bushels of export of grain? I do not take responsibility for what the press may have said. I am talking about what the minister or the government may have said.

Mr. Mazankowski: This was circulated very widely.