

the initial price of grain, and in the motion criticized the Canadian Wheat Board to some extent for its unresponsive pricing policy. At that time we were soundly criticized by the government and the New Democratic Party for trying to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board.

If my memory serves me well, it was pointed out time and again in that debate that we in this party believe in the use and viability of the Canadian Wheat Board, but feel that changes could be made in the structure to make it more responsive and receptive to the needs of all parts of Canada. At that time the minister took a different line from the one he took tonight. He also mentioned the movement of free trade in Canada. I believe that was the term he used. I believe that all parties, with the possible exception of the NDP, are in agreement on free trade within Canada. I think this is an established fact, at least for this party. It was stated in our election campaign material of last fall that if we were elected we would move to establish the free movement of grain within the area of the Canadian Wheat Board with the eventual hope of making a reality the free movement of products right across the country. At that time the minister in charge of the Wheat Board said it could not be done, that there was no way it could be accomplished without some very drastic changes. Now he seems to be in a position of advocating something along the same line.

I think one of the predominant things from the point of view of the grain producer who is selling his product to the Canadian Wheat Board is that in the past few years the Wheat Board has drifted away from the original concept because of the policies of some ministers of agriculture. At times the Canadian Wheat Board appears to be an arm of the federal government rather than the kind of agency it was set up to be namely, predominantly a selling agency.

When we can look at the Canadian Wheat Board as selling agency for a product within our own borders, and certainly for export, as its main purpose—and not for the purpose of an income-supporting agency for producers—we will have moved a great distance toward solving the troubles of western farmers. Through at times pushing a product on instructions of the government I believe the Wheat Board has become an income-supporting agency for western farmers, or at times tries to assume this role. This should not fall to the agency; this kind of role should belong to the federal government. Without saying any more about the Canadian Wheat Board, it is possible that if we are still here in two weeks and the minister brings in his amendments we might be debating this subject again. What we are really debating now is speculation.

I should like to deal with the part of the resolution that deals with oilseeds. I believe the world is in a very serious situation as far as the supply of oilseeds and food products are concerned. The situation has come upon us very quickly and I believe it is far more serious than many people think. By this fall we will experience world food shortages. In fact, there is every indication that we will witness fairly widespread famine in many countries. In Canada I believe we will experience higher consumer prices, far higher than at the present time. One has to ask why this came about so quickly. I believe there are many reasons. One is that demand in many countries has outstripped

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supply because of poor crops in some areas. It has also happened because of inadequate government planning. We have talked countless times about the Operation Lift program, but programs such as that have been devised and implemented in other countries over the past few years.

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The policy makers were caught short and, as there were poor crop yields in some countries, as the rice crop in other countries has not been as high as normal and as rising incomes in Japan and most of Europe have led to increasing demands for food, a tremendous demand was created for our agricultural products.

The United States only a few decades ago was one of the world's largest importers of soybeans, but now produces 75 per cent of the world's crop. That country finds its present domestic supplies inadequate and has imposed, as a consequence, embargoes on sales of soybeans. Canada has been forced to do the same.

What that action will mean for Canada may not be clear yet in the short term sense, but that there are high domestic food prices now is clear. I submit, however, that the message for agricultural long term planning in this country is completely clear and straightforward. I hope the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) will speak tonight and tell us what government policies there will be in future, as those policies will be very much needed.

Canada is 40 per cent self sufficient in soybean production. The remaining 60 per cent of our needs is imported from the United States. Rapeseed is western Canada's third most important cash crop, after wheat and barley, and Canada is the No. 1 rapeseed exporter in the world. We have reached this position over a short period of time, compared with the time we took to do that with other cereal grains. What we need now is clearcut direction. I am talking about long term direction, not the kind of direction that the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) have tried to give us over the past several months.

It is interesting to note that when farmers were asked how many acres they would plant to grain in western Canada, they gave a figure that is surprisingly low, particularly in view of unprecedented grain prices, prices which are higher than ever. There are two reasons for this. First, of course, one can point to the inclement weather experience in western Canada; second, the main reason for this low acreage is that farmers are not accepting government advice as readily as they might have a few years ago, because government experts have been proved wrong. There is a saying in western Canada, and possibly in Ontario too, to the effect that if the government tells you to grow something, you should grow something else or do the opposite and you will probably come out all right. Events have demonstrated the wisdom of this action.

The government must tell its experts to think more and plan more before making predictions. It should not tell farmers what grain to grow, or to plant one more field, as farmers are much too sophisticated to listen to that kind of advice.

The message is clear. Tied in one package, the message is that the politics and policies of agriculture that brought Canada through the last 75 years are not going to take her