

Supply—Agriculture

suggestion is being made that there is a disagreement between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture. Surely a minister of the crown can go to a farm organization and say, here are some suggestions. This does not make those suggestions law. I thought it was understood that when we wanted to implement something we did it here in parliament. The minister brought out some suggestions and said, what do you think of them? Supposing the Saskatchewan wheat pool had said, "Absolutely no", what harm was done? On one occasion when the Prime Minister was asked, I understand he merely said this was not government policy. He did not say it would not be government policy; he did not say they were not going to take a look at it. I think he was asking the western farmers to consider what was good for western Canada, and that is the only proper interpretation that can be put on the speech made by the Minister of Agriculture.

This situation reminds me of an evening on the prairies when the sun goes down early and the coyotes howl because their stomachs are burning with hunger. These people in the opposition howl like coyotes because their stomachs are burning for power; that is the interpretation which we can put on their attitude towards the suggestions made by the Minister of Agriculture. The minister merely went to Regina to discuss the problems of the wheat growers with their organizations, so they could both toss these suggestions around and arrive at some solution of our problems.

I want to say something about wheat sales. I got up in my place when the distinguished Leader of the Opposition was speaking, and I asked him a question. I said, "Are you against sales of wheat to China or against the sales of wheat already made to China?" He said, "If you had listened to me you would know where I stand in that regard." I do not know what he said in Halifax or other places, but it is suggested in the newspapers he said he did not support us. Why did he not say right there, if he wanted to be on the record, "Yes, I endorse these sales that have been made." I put a second question to him. "Would you endorse further sales made under present circumstances?" He gave me the same fuzzy sort of answer. I would say to the hon. member for Assiniboia that this fuzziness is not going over in western Canada because the people do not understand it, you do not understand it, we do not understand it and nobody will ever understand it.

Now, what about this other argument of theirs? There is no man who is now living and who was born on a wheat farm who does not know the history of the Canadian wheat board. I said this the last time I spoke in

parliament, but it bears repeating. The Liberals would like the farmers in western Canada to believe that the step we took in agriculture lessened the powers of the wheat board. Let us see where they stood on the wheat board over the years. Who introduced the Canadian wheat board? It was established by a Conservative government. Who wanted to get rid of the Canadian wheat board when they were returned to power in 1935? During the recess I took time off to look in *Hansard* at the debates of that time. Mackenzie King was returned to power and Mr. McFarland was fired. They were going to destroy the wheat board. They blamed the board for the surplus of wheat, for the price of wheat and for everything. They told the farmers, "You are on your own". However, the pressure groups from western Canada supported the board, as did this party in opposition at the time and I must give credit to the C.C.F. of those days for their support. The Liberals, therefore, did not make that move. Any member who was in the house at that time and took part in those debates knows these are the facts.

What about the wheat board? The wheat board was established, certainly, as the agency for the orderly marketing of wheat. It was also the agency under which the first floor price of 87.5 cents a bushel was established. This floor was placed under wheat by the Conservatives. How have the Liberals used the wheat board over the years? I am going to quote from an authority on the Canadian grain trade, Mr. MacGibbon, a former member of the Canadian wheat board. There are some of us who can recall this record because my father at the time was making his living out of producing wheat in the Rosetown-Biggan constituency and he was one farmer who shared in the loss of \$600 million as a result of Liberal farm policies at that time.

Let us see what the learned author has to say about the functions of the wheat board at that time. I quote from page 66:

It should be noted, however, that while the government's measures were directed towards giving the wheat producers basic protection, the general wartime controls instituted to keep down prices applied more severely to wheat than to any other commodity.

The Liberals used the Canadian wheat board to put a ceiling on the price of wheat and not for a floor under the price of wheat. This is the indictment I place against the Liberals this afternoon. The hon. member for Assiniboia, when he spoke on this occasion, would have to agree with me then if he does not do so today.

I come to another sad story when we are talking about their glowing agricultural program, and this is why they have not