

Canadian Wheat Board Act

committee for the past year. As hon. members know, the committee travelled through western Canada.

One of the recommendations made by the committee read as follows:

Your committee therefore recommends that legislation be introduced, after the usual procedures have been completed, which would extend the jurisdiction of the Canadian wheat board so that it would be the sole Canadian marketing agency for rye, flax and rapeseed.

I wish to bring this recommendation to the attention of the minister and commend it to him.

When I spoke in the debate the other day and referred to rye and flax I suggested that some people were not as anxious to see rapeseed brought under the board's jurisdiction. I have to amend that statement today and say they are just as anxious to see rapeseed included. In fact, no farm organization in western Canada has indicated it is at variance with the recommendations of the agriculture committee in this connection. That is all I wish to say at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the minister is aware of the fact that under our rules he is not permitted to speak at this time unless he has the unanimous consent of the house. If he wishes me to do so I will ask the house for consent.

Does the house give consent to the minister speaking, now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am bound to say I was not aware of that rule and thought I would have an opportunity to reply as of right. I am grateful to hon. members for giving unanimous consent, although I intend to speak only briefly.

Little has been added that was not said on second reading, so nothing is required from me by way of rebuttal. The hon. member for Medicine Hat referred to speeches which were made on other occasions by the Leader of the Opposition, but I am relatively new in my responsibility for the wheat board and I have not heard those speeches.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Neither had he, except in his imagination.

• (4:50 p.m.)

Mr. Winters: I was pleased to hear the hon. member's references and enjoyed them very much. The Leader of the Opposition referred

to interpretations placed on my presentation during second reading. I tried to be factual. I have always gone on the basis that one cannot alter facts. You can alter the interpretation of facts but not the facts themselves. I did not think there was anything in the factual content of my presentation with which the right hon. gentleman would disagree. I referred to the fact that it was under his administration that the first contract with communist China was negotiated by the wheat board, and China has proven a good market for Canada ever since. Reference was made to the fact that the sale of 5½ million bushels of wheat to Yugoslavia was inconsequential. However, sometimes it is these small things that establish precedents which lead to greater business later on, and we are hopeful that that will be the case.

The right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) also referred to the port of Churchill and urged us to greater efforts. I have replied occasionally to questions put by the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) and told him we are working very hard. It is not always easy to persuade the shipping lines to take wheat out of Churchill. The season is short, and the shipping season itself happens to coincide with the season during which wheat is coming on to the major markets of Europe. Therefore there is not a great incentive for the shipping lines to take wheat out of Churchill.

By dint of hard work the wheat board has been able to succeed to the point where we can contemplate a shipping season from Churchill which we think will be at least as good as last year. We are still working and hopeful for better things; but of course I cannot guarantee that at this stage, because so much is beyond our control.

I will be very glad to review the quota system. I have not had an opportunity to talk recently to the wheat board about it but I will do so, and hope I will be able to say something about that at an early date. The elevator at Moose Jaw did get a considerable amount of business after the matter came up at an earlier date and it will be used to the fullest extent consistent with the primary functions of the wheat board, which are to sell and move wheat.

With respect to the matter of rye, flax and rapeseed, I was aware of the recommendation of the agricultural committee. I alluded to that in the debate on second reading. I told hon. members that I was impressed by that recommendation but wished more time to study it, since my association with the wheat