

*Canadian Wheat Board Act*

I am not competent to speak on the problem as it exists in eastern Canada, but I have heard reports that it does exist there as well. I suggest to my hon. friends opposite, to the Minister of Agriculture and the minister piloting this bill through, that the day will come when they will regret having been part of this conspiracy. There is no doubt that it will be necessary to retrace their steps and settle people back in the desolate areas from which they have come as a result of the policy of this government.

Not too long ago the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) spoke about net social benefit, but I think he had his tongue in his cheek. He spoke of it being a result of the gross national product of the country, which is one of the present indicators of our economic progress. In their deliberate scheme to strip the rural areas of family farms and send the people to the cities, I suggest that the government will have to retrace their steps and make it possible for these people to stay on the land. I could put on record hundreds of letters from people in my district who have been compelled to leave and who are anxious about the new life they face. They are concerned about leaving areas where the local municipalities have been involved in the school structure, in the system of utilities, in building up a society equipped to deal with a given number of people. When a half or a third or two-thirds of the people leave, those remaining face staggering problems. In all seriousness, I suggest to the government that they should review their policies and programs and not compel people to leave the land just because the government thinks that step must be taken.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. Before allowing the hon. Minister without Portfolio in charge of the wheat board to speak in the debate at this time, I must warn hon. members that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, this debate on the amendments to the Wheat Board Act has ranged over a period of approximately two weeks, and during that time we have heard from 20 members of the opposition.

**An hon. Member:** How many sitting days?

**Mr. Lang:** They have dealt almost totally either with one section of the bill or with matters not related to it at all. As I assess their general remarks, they support most of the amendments in the bill. With the exception of that one section they have either supported or not commented on the other amending sections so I take it that they are in agreement with those parts they have not commented on as well as those to which they have made reference. Their remarks related to agricultural matters generally, and there were several speeches on another bill before this House which is not part of this one. On occasion they linked the three pieces of legislation as though they were one. I refer to the three bills relating to grain which are before the House or on their way through committee. Certainly, the three bills are related in an effort to

[Mr. Baldwin.]

improve the economic position of the grain farmer in western Canada.

• (4:00 p.m.)

In my opening remarks on one of these bills, I indicated formally my view and that of the government that those farmers who want to continue farming should be helped in every way we know in order to do so. That would be done by having that part of the system over which they have no control put in the best possible shape for them. I urged hon. members at that time to refrain from the mischievous and, indeed, malicious suggestion that in some way someone is out to get farmers off the farm against their will. I should really use the words used by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) to describe this suggestion. The words he used in describing it are, "stupid, false and wrong." Really, that is the best characterization of this continuing attempt to put fear into the hearts of people whose economic and social difficulties are already great enough. There is no need to stir up this idea of some great conspiracy lurking in the wings.

The main issue in the debate before the House, to the extent that it was relevant at all, touched on that section of the legislation which proposes to allow the addition, by order in council, of rapeseed, flax and rye under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. This will be done by extending parts III and IV to cover those grains, should it seem appropriate at some point to do so. Hon. members opposite have been divided in their views on that section. On the one hand, on the left, there is the view that this should be done immediately, without enabling legislation. These views were accompanied by strong statements that this ought to be done since everyone knows that producers are in favour of doing this now. From the right came sounds of indignation that anyone should even think about consulting producers. There were statements that the producers seemed to be lined up against that view—

**Mr. Korchinski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think it was amply illustrated in the House by various speakers, myself included—and a motion was moved to this effect—that our party had taken the position that we welcomed and wanted a plebiscite on this question.

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) clarify his position on this point. As I listened to the speeches from the opposite side I had detected that those hon. members of the Conservative party who either had rapeseed growers in their constituency or knew something about rapeseed tended to be rather more broadminded about consulting the producers on the issue. I thought that the hon. member for Mackenzie had clearly expanded the view that the producers were totally against any change in the marketing system. I was glad to hear him in his point of order join me in the suggestion that the producers deserve to be consulted fully on this issue and adopt my view that, in this area, we should put ourselves into the position of serving the producers in the way they want to