

allowed to individual shippers, but they could not give me the answer then. I know that under the block system producers have difficulty getting individual cars, and this is inherent in the system. I am sure the minister would agree that we must see to it that the individual shipper has some assurance of rights to boxcars under the block system. I think that both the Wheat Board and the Board of Grain Commissioners are willing to work this out. This is a factor which makes this matter we are talking about extremely important, Mr. Speaker.

If during the crop year a farmer could walk into a station and say, "I want a boxcar for my rapeseed or flaxseed as I am going to ship it to the head of the lakes or the west coast", then he would have an alternative to any pricing system set up by the grain companies. This is an important point. He could consign his produce to Thunder Bay or Vancouver and instruct his agent to get him the spot price at that point. This price would cover what it actually cost to move the grain and would be related to what the importer would pay.

I do not necessarily get starry-eyed about any particular method of doing anything, Mr. Speaker, but I insist that the producer has a right to the highest price that the market will stand and I do not think that is what he gets. I would have been much happier if the minister had said this afternoon that, regardless of the type of system used, the farmer would receive the highest price that the market would stand; but he did not say this. Through the correspondence which he made available to the House he knows that, during the last crop years, the pricing system has not been working to the satisfaction of the producer. He knows that and I know it, because I took the time and trouble to document it. That is what we are really looking at in the final analysis.

If the people responsible for the grain exchange operation tell me that they are not responsible for the street price that is set or for the elevator system today, I am prepared to accept that they are not. If what you may call the free and open market is not going to be a mechanism for setting the price the farmer will get in the market place, then I say to the minister that, under those circumstances, it had better be the Wheat Board. As a farmer I am prepared to accept, and over the years I have accepted, a marketing system which works and which I am confident will bring me a return equal to what the market will stand. I am not prepared to accept a marketing system which will not do that, which is subject to manipulation, subject to a little bit off for invisible losses and all that sort of thing. Who do they think they are kidding?

Perhaps the minister will reply at the end of this debate and be a little more specific. If he wants to hold a plebiscite or ask the farmers to hold a plebiscite in order to find out what they want, I can tell him it would not be the first time that has been done. It is a democratic way of approaching the problem. However, when he says he really does not know if he will do anything at all, then he will have to answer for the situation that exists in this crop year. He will have to answer for that situation or divorce himself from responsibility for marketing those particular crops. I do not think the minister can

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stand aside as an observer. He cannot say that it is no concern of his and it is up to the farmers and the companies to see that the inequities and malfunctions of this system are corrected. I think it has to be one way or the other.

The "Pool Broadcast" of April 28, 1971 reads in its opening paragraph:

A bill that may extend the Canadian Wheat Board marketing system to include rye, flax and rapeseed was introduced in the House of Commons last week.

Then, somebody got Mr. E. K. Turner, President of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool before a microphone and he said:

Well, the legislation is certainly not dangerous because it doesn't do anything. It just makes it possible to do something, and, of course, their concern is that it will remove from them the opportunity to make handsome profits on the sale of these grains.

That is the assessment of the Saskatchewan pool, that it is not dangerous because it does not do anything. They probably have come to the conclusion that it does not intend to do anything.

Perhaps the minister will have something further to say on these two points: first, if the stabilization program is to have any chance to actually reflect the average income of farmers for three years, then in a year when the minister decides there is a shortfall in the industry, for two grains as important as rapeseed and flaxseed, the percentage paid will have to relate to what the producer received for them. I do not see how the minister can achieve this unless there is a pool price. If he is not going to do this he should take these three grains out of the stabilization fund and only attempt to operate it on the grains on which he can establish a price, unless he is not interested in the farmer but is only interested in stabilizing the economy. The alternative is to consider ways and means of ensuring a stable price for the producer.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I heard the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) talking about rapeseed as an important product. It is an important part of our agricultural industry, and I agree with him. For many years, Mr. Speaker, I have been growing rapeseed. At one time you could not deliver it to the elevators, because the elevator companies could not be bothered with it. You could only sell rapeseed if you grew enough to load a boxcar and shipped it yourself. I have sold it under contract, as the hon. member for Peace River described. I have handled it often enough and marketed it through enough channels to have some idea of what is involved. I am sure that the minister has advisers in his group who like to tell him about these things. We have not seen the recommendations of the oil seeds groups. I think the minister should make these available to us when the bill goes before the committee. If the report is available, I have not seen it. It ought to be available to enable us to make an intelligent judgment about what should be done. I know some of the members of that committee. They should be able to come to grips with the problem that is involved here.