

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, for some time we have been making representations on this matter, that is to say, the targeting of traditional Canadian markets by this United States program. Not only did we do so at the most recent meetings of Mr. Clark and Secretary of State Shultz but considerable detail was gone into by Mr. Clark and Mr. Shultz at their meeting in Brussels last October. This matter has also been the subject of representations—very strong representations—by our embassy in Washington. The ambassador, on behalf of the government, objected to recent U.S. targeting of the Soviet Union, China, Algeria and Iraq. There were meetings last month between Ambassador Gottlieb and the United States Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. special trade representative Clayton Yeuter.

I simply place those instances on the record as an indication of the high importance that we attach to this matter and of our continuing representations bilaterally and our continuing activity multilaterally to give this issue priority.

Senator Argue: I am greatly disappointed, if I may say so, with that answer. The minister is very well informed and, judging from that answer, obviously the question of those subsidies was not raised when Secretary Shultz was here.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Clark, as far as I know, made no mention at all of that subject either before or following his meeting with the American Secretary of State. That says to me, along with the answer from the Leader of the Government, that this matter was not raised.

My question was: Was it raised, and in what terms was it raised? Why was there no publicity attached to its being raised so that Mr. Clark could come out and report the reaction or the response? I think that is a legitimate question. In western Canada we think that these subsidies are important. They are important to us because they are hurting us; they are hurting the whole economy. Why was this question not raised at the meeting just a few days ago, if not last October?

● (1410)

Senator Murray: The honourable senator prefaced his statement by saying, "As far as I know, . . ." I think that covers a multitude of sins.

Senator Argue: The minister knows that the question was not raised—and the minister will not say that it was raised, because it was not raised. Now I can say that I have, I think, definite evidence that it was not raised. The Leader of the Government in the Senate has not said that it was raised.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

REPORTED APPOINTMENT OF BARBARA ISMAN

Hon. Hazen Argue: I have another question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I hear—

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Is this another rumour?

[Senator Argue.]

Senator Argue: Yes, this is another rumour which I hope you will dispell.

Senator Murray: Go ahead.

Senator Argue: Just keep on interrupting. The leader is not doing very well today with his responses, but he can try this question.

The reports I hear, usually from well-informed sources, say that the Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds) is considering the appointment of Barbara Isman, who has been the Executive Director, Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association.

Senator Barootes: That's pronounced "Izman".

Senator Argue: I always pronounced it "Iceman" when I met with her, and I was not corrected; but I have been corrected now. In any event, we will simply call her Barbara.

The people who have talked to me—and this rumour is very widespread—are opposed to the appointment of somebody to the Canadian Wheat Board from an organization that has been exceedingly critical and often opposed to the policies of the Canadian Wheat Board. The people who support the system of the orderly marketing of grain will be greatly disturbed if this report should have some substance.

So, I ask the leader to convey to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board that this would be a very inadvisable appointment.

I hope to receive some response. I say that because I think it is important to the orderly marketing of grain. The Canadian Wheat Board does a good job, and the commissioners should continue to be highly qualified people drawn from organizations that support the orderly marketing system and not from an organization that for many years has been totally opposed to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, the answer is that responsible ministers do not comment on rumours.

Senator Argue: If the leader is not prepared to discuss this, that is fine, but is he prepared to convey this discussion to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, or, as he is now called, the Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)?

Senator Murray: My colleague, the Honourable Charles Mayer, is an avid reader of Senate *Hansard*. I am sure he will take note of the honourable senator's representations.

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

DRUG PRICE INCREASES—REQUEST FOR RESIGNATION OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTER

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I wonder if since yesterday the leader has had an opportunity to talk to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to find out if he is going to take any action because of drug prices being raised by 5 per cent and as much as 250 per cent over the past six months.