

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that the 10-minute period is for questions and comments. Surely, we are not going to take 10 minutes in a soliloquy which in itself is a minor speech. I would like to have an opportunity to put on the record some things that straighten out the record, in terms of what the Hon. Member is saying, before the 10 minutes are concluded.

**Mr. Foster:** I was just about finished, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to comment on the final point or two in the Canadian Federation of Agriculture brief to the Prime Minister. It is concerned about the failure of the Government to consult with industry on policy administration for import quotas. It is further concerned about the failure on the part of the Government to make a strong public commitment to the continued integrity of the Canadian Wheat Board.

These are not the words of the Official Opposition or the NDP. This is a toughly worded statement of the President and the national council, of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the largest umbrella group in Canada. It not only covers the western pools, but it covers the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, UPA, and other such groups.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Crofton):** A point of order.

**Mr. Mayer:** If the Hon. Member wants to get up and speak and listen to himself, that is fine. If he is prepared to make a comment, I would be more than happy to try to respond to it. If he just wants to get up and put on record a diatribe, without listening to what is being said in the speech that I just concluded and giving me a chance, that is another story.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Crofton):** I thank the Minister for his intervention, but I was watching the time closely and I had every intention of giving the Minister an opportunity to respond. Has the Hon. Member concluded his remarks?

● (1920)

**Mr. Foster:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister wants to respond and I think he should because the Prime Minister has not. These are important organizations. The Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee is the committee that advises his own Wheat Board. Its members are elected throughout the regions of the West—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Crofton):** I recognize the Minister.

**Mr. Mayer:** First, Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that if the Hon. Member would listen to what I just said and if he wants to take the word of the advisory committee, that is one thing, but I suggest he talk to the Canadian Wheat Board. Let me give the Hon. Member what the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board said about the free trade agreement and how the board operates. He said that they would be delighted to have access to the U.S. market without threat of

quotas being imposed. The threat of quotas is there now under Section 22 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

I point out to the Hon. Member that, if anything, the free trade agreement strengthens the way the Canadian Wheat Board operates because under the agreement the Board is given responsibility for issuing permits to let grain come into the country, if and when we get to a situation where levels of support are equal on both sides of the border. The board has in turn asked the Canadian Grain Commission to carry out that responsibility. There is a case where, if anything, the board's abilities to operate under its present set of conditions is strengthened.

When I tell the Hon. Member what the Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board just said and point out how it will be administered under the agreement, I think he has to admit that that does not do anything but strengthen the way the Canadian Wheat Board operates.

Let me tell the Hon. Member what one American group said about the agreement. This is the National Association of Wheat Growers, the largest association of wheat growers in the United States. Its president, Mr. James Miller said:

"Canada came out the clear winner in the free trade agreement—at least in wheat—because it—

"It" meaning Canada. He continued:

—will gain access to the huge U.S. market without giving anything in return."

That is what a representative of the American wheat industry said about the agreement. That tells me that our negotiators did a very good job of negotiating on behalf of Canada, especially on behalf of Canadian agriculture.

I do not understand some of these things, Mr. Speaker. I just pointed out that we are probably as good a producer of grain and oilseeds as anybody in the world. We have been able to compete successfully every place, including the United States. Why are people given that fact—and it is a fact—so nervous about giving the Canadian Wheat Board and our system of producing and selling an opportunity to compete under a uniform and fair set of rules? I do not understand this kind of thinking. We are good at what we do. We have nothing in our history that suggests we cannot compete and yet we have people saying: "We are afraid. We do not want to compete. We do not want to open the border. We are not sure how good we are." It is like having a prize bull. You are sure this bull is the best in the world, but you keep the poor bugger behind a barn and a ten-foot slab fence; you never give him a chance to come out and compete.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mayer:** That is what we are doing. We are very good at what we do. All we want is a fair chance to compete under the rules. That is what this deal does.