

Canadian Wheat Board Act

questions were asked in the House about the policing that was being carried out in order to discover whether grain was being moved illegally from Saskatchewan to Alberta. The reply which we received from the government was that they had investigated the situation and found that nothing illegal was happening in regard to the movement of grain. We knew differently.

• (8:50 p.m.)

That is why we now see provision being made for the orderly marketing of this type of grain in the legislation before us. It seems to me too many statements have been made in the House condemning the Wheat Board for its failure in the field of orderly marketing. In my humble opinion the board has not been given the right to go about the orderly marketing of grain in such a way that the producers in western Canada can receive a fair return on their investment.

In this connection, Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that I wrote a letter to the Minister of Agriculture just about two years ago, in May, 1969, on this subject. I believe it was on May 17 of that year and I think it will be of interest to hon. members if I quote the letter that I addressed to him. I wrote:

I have received many letters requesting the placing of feed grains, rye and flax under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I believe you will agree that this is a matter of serious concern, particularly in view of the fact that there appears to be an increase in the acreage of rye, flax and rape.

It would be appreciated if your department would give serious consideration to this developing situation, as the farmer is finding himself in a precarious position.

Thanking you for the consideration shown in the past.

Many hon. members have suggested in this debate that the sale of rapeseed and flaxseed should not necessarily be placed within the responsibility of the Wheat Board, but I point out that two years ago these grains were becoming a surplus on the market, to the extent that I wrote the government asking that it take action to bring about orderly marketing of these grains. On May 22, 1969, the Minister of Agriculture replied to my letter as follows:

I have your letter of May 21 pertaining to the placing of feed grains, rye and flax under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Fundamentally, the Canadian Wheat Board is a producers' marketing board, operating under federal legislation but overcoming the constitutional problem of jurisdiction by the enabling legislation passed by the provincial governments. The acts passed by Manitoba and Alberta cover only wheat, oats and barley. Thus it would not be possible for the Wheat Board to add the other grains to its coverage without legislative action by these provincial governments.

Even if the niceties of the legal side were satisfied, there is still the question of how much better off the producers would be if these other grains were brought under the jurisdiction of the board. There is evidence that less of each would be sold, and I understand that the board believes such might well be the case. Indeed I am sure that you have heard the increasing clamour to have even oats and barley regulations relaxed in order to move more of these grains. Marketing experts believe that while a pooling operation such as the Wheat Board's works well for a commodity like wheat, it is not suitable to Canadian oilseed crops because of their vulnerability to the competition

[Mr. Skoberg.]

from other oil seed crops produced in abundance throughout the world. The cost of marketing specialty crop grains through the Wheat Board could lower the returns to the producer.

Many western farmers insist on having access to a cash crop market, and count on their sales of rye, flaxseed and rapeseed for cash income when the regulated market for wheat, oats and barley is closed to them. With all grains under the Board a situation could easily arise where producers would not be able to make any deliveries at all. You can easily guess what the result would be.

It is unfortunate that these grains have to use the same transporting, handling and sorting facilities as do the Board grains. Because this is the case the Wheat Board must regulate their movement through the system by means of delivery quotas, arbitrary stock levels, etc. This, to my mind, provides the major basis for producers in their demands that the board merchandise these grains for them. It is a problem that I would hope the Canada Grains Council will be able to tackle and solve, soon.

These are some of my thoughts on this matter. I try to review them periodically so as to not to become stuck with outmoded ideas, but so far I am not at all enamoured with this notion that rye, flaxseed and rapeseed marketing belongs in the Wheat Board orbit.

Mr. McIntosh: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) has quoted from these two letters, I wonder if he would now table them.

Mr. Speaker: Our Standing Orders do not provide for the tabling of documents by private members.

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Speaker, if there were unanimous consent I would be only too pleased to table them. In any event, hon. members can read them in *Hansard* tomorrow. It appears that the Minister of Agriculture has moved from the position he adopted two years ago and has not remained stuck with an outmoded idea. But it is strange that two years ago when these grains were in a surplus position he did not have great concern for the situation. I think the minister in charge of the Wheat Board has an obligation to explain this to the House in his closing statement. Perhaps he will tell us if the Minister of Agriculture was somewhat outmoded two years ago.

The fact remains that there is a feeling throughout the country that these grains should not have to come under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. I hope the minister in charge of the board realizes he must consult directly with the people involved in the marketing and producing of these grains, to see if they can make a living as entrepreneurs in the present laissez faire system surrounding the marketing of them.

I would be highly suspicious reading anything from James Richardson and Sons that would indicate they were very excited about futures so far as the three grains in question are concerned. As the hon. member for Saskatchewan- Biggar (Mr. Gleave) said earlier today, it will be interesting to see at the end of the crop year how the futures market has operated in the selling of these grains and whether producers who sold in the futures market were, in effect, raped by that type of trading. As the National Farmers Union and the pools have indicated, time will provide the answer.

A year ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to tour Central and East Africa and in Lusaka met the President