

the west impaired their ability to listen to the arguments being made, to assess the evidence and to form a reasonable judgment on the basis of what was before them. Like another member who spoke earlier in the debate, I take exception to this argument. It is one which does no credit to the House of Commons, to the standing committee or to the individuals putting it forward. I do not believe it carries any weight at all.

It is an extremely divisive position for a member to take. As a westerner, I initially came forward for election from a constituency in Saskatchewan with a fundamental belief in the basic reasonableness of Canadians in all parts of this country. We in the west have had what is called, in some circles—perhaps too grandly—a feeling of alienation, a feeling that somehow our interests are not taken fully into consideration; that somehow we are left out of the decision-making process. It was my belief, when I stood for election, that this feeling of western alienation, real as it might be, was not completely justified in the sense that there were a great many initiatives being taken by the present government to relieve the concerns of westerners. I believed great progress was being made to identify and eliminate the root causes of the malaise we call western alienation.

At the root of my confidence, that we could overcome this feeling of alienation was my belief that all Canadians are basically fair-minded people whether they are asked to deal, for example, with a simple amendment to the Wheat Board Act, or the question of amending the freight rate structure as a whole. I was convinced that Canadians from other parts of the country would be prepared to listen to argument and hear the evidence, and that once they did so they would be willing and anxious to respond in a positive manner to the arguments we were making.

Surely this is a more positive approach to confederation and to the legislative process—an optimistic approach as we look forward, in a realistic way, to making the kind of changes which will work to the proper advantage of western Canada. I have confidence in Canadians and believe that through them this goal can be achieved. I have confidence in members on both sides of the House and, again, I believe that with their help our objectives can be reached. In the particular context of my remarks today, I have confidence that those who were present when this matter was being discussed before the standing committee listened to the arguments that were put forward and made a good judgment on the evidence before them, not in a biased or hasty fashion which could work to the detriment of the farmers of western Canada. I take exception to the point which was made, attacking the credibility and integrity of members on this side who serve on the committee and who do a tremendous job for all farmers both from the east and from the west.

To sum up, in the circumstances before us I think it is desirable to opt for flexibility and maintain a broad range of choice. As I say, if we determine that there is a problem, and that the interests of producers are being impaired, we could take corrective action either by legislation or by regulation. The first advisory board chosen on the basis of election is now established, and I have no evidence that there has been any impairment of the interests of the farmers as a result of the system used. The farmers them-

selves are the electors; they have the franchise in their own hands, and I am satisfied they will make the ultimate decision in their own best interests.

**Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, I want to address a few words to the amendment in the name of my hon. friend from Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) with respect to the selection of the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board.

● (1220)

I listened to the last speaker during this debate, the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale). I must say that I have always respected his ability to research a matter, but I am disturbed that he should be concerned that there is something wrong with insisting that producing farmers should provide the nucleus of this advisory committee. We are not talking about the Wheat Board, of course; we are talking about the advisory committee to the Wheat Board. Surely, that in itself should suggest that producers should only be members of this type of board.

I have in mind a man from my own area. He has tremendous responsibility in that he represents that area consisting of over half of the southern part of Alberta. He is a very aggressive producer in that area and is a member of the advisory committee. His name is Orville Reber, of Burdett, southern Alberta. This is the type of producing farmer who can tell the story, on behalf of the farmers he represents, in a very convincing way. I am sure he has made some members of the Wheat Board and of the grain trades a little annoyed because of his persistence. But he gets the story across and the message is there.

For the hon. member for Assiniboia to suggest it is premature to call for total farmer representation on this advisory committee is unfair and unjust. He suggested that perhaps, when the need becomes apparent, we should consider this question. I say the need is now, because the government, in its wisdom, has already agreed there should be an advisory committee; and that advisory committee, in its wisdom, must advise about grain producers' problems. For that reason there is great need to support this motion all the way down the line.

There is another reason for supporting the amendment. The producer who represents the grain growers, or the farmers, is much more knowledgeable about another pressing matter in western Canada, and that is the conflict of interest between producers of domestic feed grain and the customers, the feeders of hogs and cattle. For far too long we have only had one side of the argument presented at the Wheat Board level. Surely, with producers on the advisory committee, all of them farmers, they will be much more knowledgeable in that two-sided argument as to how we should use domestic feed grain in western Canada in order that the feeding industry will survive. Let me leave it at that for now, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I simply want to make one point, and it seems that perhaps it can only be done by repetition. Those who are to be electing the members of the advisory committee are all going to be producers. Surely the election should be left to them. If you look at Bill C-88, you will find that the regulations which have been stipu-