

Feed Grains

of feed grains. Several years ago there was an excellent barley crop in the Peace River country. As a result of the same kind of rumour produced by the government, the farmers believed that there would be an exceedingly high price for barley. Therefore, the farmers, under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, obtained advances representing large sums of money in the belief, prompted by reports emanating from the Department of Agriculture, and the situation existing in the department of the Minister of Justice, that they would receive prices which would justify their taking these advances. Of course, this did not happen. Prices went down and many of these farmers had to get rid of their grain at a disadvantage. Since that time there have been three crops which have not been good because of inclement weather.

Last week while attending a farmers meeting in the Peace River country I was handed by one of my farmer friends a statement of claim issued by Her Majesty in the name of Canada. That statement of claim involved an amount of \$1,800 which was the balance owing on a \$2,500 advance under that act. An amount of \$700 had been paid on account. Because of the fact that this farmer had had two bad crops he was now being sued. Here is the statement of claim with the Great Seal appearing on it. The Wheat Board sent out a bailiff to serve this document. There is probably mileage involved so possibly the cost will amount to \$150 or \$200, even more if the case goes to judgment.

That is not all. I had occasion to telephone the sheriff on the judicial district of Peace River and the sheriff of the judicial district of Grand Prairie. Almost 400 farmers have been sued during the past few months, most of them during June, at a time when it is notorious that farmers do not have the money to pay these bills. And this despite the fact that they have a good crop year coming up. As I say, they have been sued: these documents have been sent out. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) talks about not wanting to send police from farm to farm. He and the Canadian Wheat Board are sending bailiffs from farm to farm, at very high mileage costs, to serve these papers on the farmers. I am not making any threats, Mr. Speaker, but I suggest that the minister get in touch with the Wheat Board and tell it to suspend further action in these cases which now number some 400.

● (2230)

These are good farmers. The amounts owned total some \$600,000. I am not acting as a lawyer but as an ombudsman, as a member of parliament representing these people, in the same capacity as I am sure hon. members to my left would act. From my experience as a lawyer I would say that the costs involved are \$75,000 to \$80,000. I say that is a shameful, shocking action on the part of the Wheat Board. If the minister does not know about it, he should acquaint himself with the situation.

Mr. Lang: Do you condone failing to pay debts?

Mr. Baldwin: It is not a question of failing to pay debts. If the Minister of Justice thinks this is the way to treat good, honest farmers, it is about time he left his job as a minister and as a member of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: They promised to have the grain.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this evening, but I am quite surprised to see that it is an emergency debate, especially when considering the conditions since the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board. While examining the motion of the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave), I realize that he is sounding himself, that he is concerned and that he is asking the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) to state before Parliament the new policy which the government intends to develop for the sale and pricing of feed grain.

First I must congratulate the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board for its excellent work during the last two years. I have attended the sittings of the Standing Committee on Agriculture since my election in 1968 and I have noted Mr. Speaker, the efforts of the officials of the Canadian Wheat Board to sensitize all countries and act as dealers trying to capture part of the market for the marketing of western grain. Considering the outcome of these trade missions, I would be ashamed to be a member of the opposition and to call the minister the names we have heard in this House last year and even this year. I am wondering if these members are talking in the name of grain producers or if they represent the interests of some other people.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) filibustering during two years the proposal in respect of the farm products marketing national policy. We have seen the same member for Crowfoot, when amendments to the wheat board were brought forward concerning grain standards, and again in 1969, he did filibustering at the time of the development of the new grain policy. We wondered if he was representing the producers or the interests of elevator owners. Once again this evening, when time comes to discuss the adoption of a modern policy, a policy designed to meet a need, the same member for Crowfoot makes himself the spokesman for the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, let me summarize the history of the Canadian Wheat Board to reach my conclusion: that board has been the topic of considerable discussion in this House. When we study the powers it was granted, it seems empowered to control all movements of cereals for export between the western provinces and the rest of Canada. It has the power to control the imports of feed grains except for feed corn.

However, Mr. Speaker—and I speak now as a member representing all of Canada and not only the province of Quebec—we accept that the Canadian Wheat Board should protect the interests of western producers as well, when need be, that it should fight for the western producers that they might get a decent price for their produce, and find markets for them.

We have accepted that situation; however, Mr. Speaker, in the east we have but one power, that of trying to intervene when the need arises, when prices are set by the board, above all to serve the interests of western farmers. But there is no agency, in the east, to represent us ade-