

Mr. MOLGAT: I am thinking of all the farmers, but as Leader of the Liberal Party in Manitoba, my first responsibility is to the farmers in this province.

Mr. CLERMONT: I am a federal member, so I must examine the question from a national viewpoint.

Mr. MOLGAT: Agreed.

Mr. CLERMONT: This is what interests me, Mr. Molgat. Today, we heard several briefs from Manitoba. Amongst others, one from the government of Manitoba submitted by the Honourable Mr. Enns, the Minister of Agriculture, another by the Manitoba Pool, another by the United Grain Growers, and you have presented another one. And they all seem most concerned about the new Eastern Feed Grain Agency. And I wonder why this is. Because in the final analysis, you are not the only one to say it as it appears in the other briefs, the Eastern Feed Grain Agency is a Crown company and the Wheat Board is another Crown agency. And you seem to feel that Eastern Canada and British Columbia are going to have an agency to represent them in the purchasing, the distribution and the storing of wheat and feed grains. And the fact that it is a purchasing agency is going to enable the eastern provinces to benefit from low prices. McNamara said that he was ready to co-operate 100 per cent with this agency, but the agency should not expect to get appreciably lower prices.

Mr. MOLGAT: I believe that Mr. McNamara has submitted what our viewpoint is. May I say that here the Wheat Board is the agency of the farmers, of the western farmers. The Wheat Board is not subsidized in any way whatsoever by the federal government. All the expenditures of the Wheat Board are paid by the farmers themselves. Let us look at the coin from the side. If you have an agency for feed grains, we would recommend that that agency be like the Wheat Board, that it be the farmers who take part in it, who pay their share of the expenditures of the agency.

(English)

The CHAIRMAN: It is the responsibility of all farmers.

Mr. CLERMONT: If we want to go into the discussion that Crown companies are subsidized, I could certainly speak to you about the Board of Grain Commissioners. Part of their expenditures are met from the Treasury of the Canadian Government.

Mr. MOLGAT: But when we speak of these two agencies, the sales agency, that one is not subsidized.

Mr. CLERMONT: But sincerely, I think, Mr. Molgat, that the importance of the Canadian Feed Grains Agency is this. The eastern farmer, just like the B.C. farmer, was complaining of the fact that during January, February and March, there was a sudden rise in the price levels, and more often than otherwise, the farmer wondered why this was. And I feel that the main idea was expressed this morning—the main idea setting out the Eastern Feed Grain Agency—by the member for Provencher—I do not remember his name just now; I think it was Mr. Jorgensen. He expressed the view very well. It was that this agency is mainly to see to the proper distribution and to see that there be reasonable price levels throughout the twelve months of the year.