

Adjournment Debate

I note that in his answer to my question the minister said he thought I was in favour of Wheat Board marketing. He is quite right, I am. I believe we need to leave the Wheat Board in a position that it is free to make its day to day decisions, but the producer and the feeder should also know within what frame of reference the general policy is operating.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to say a few words in answer to the question of the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave). For quite some time now the Canadian Wheat Board in effect has been pricing barley into the Canadian domestic market, outside of the designated area, at prices which bear a fair relationship to the competitive potential of American corn. It has done this during a period of time when world grain prices were very low and where, on occasion, in order to continue to move our products into markets and to secure and maintain customers it was willing to offer barley at prices fairly low throughout the world. It at that point offered at prices somewhat higher in eastern Canada and British Columbia, maintaining that competitiveness with American corn which has marked our pricing since about three years ago when the Wheat Board decided to compete and avoid the entering into Canada of the American feed grain product.

It has now been holding those markets in British Columbia and eastern Canada against competitive corn really on the same principle, even though on occasion and for a variety of reasons international prices may have been higher than American corn, as they have in recent days. It is interesting that when domestic prices were higher than international prices, they still were very low prices, generally not covering the cost of production. Now that they are falling behind international prices, they more likely reflect a fair return.

There is another consideration facing us which we will be dealing with in the days ahead, and that is the challenge to maintain a fair relationship between feed grain prices in the designated area and prices outside that area. The government has committed itself to maintaining that relationship by a formula which we hope to announce prior to August 1, the start of the new crop year. That is important in order to maintain a fair balance between competitiveness of the different regions of the country.

In answer to the direct question of the hon. member, I would say that for the last several years it has been the Wheat Board's policy to price Canadian barley in relation to American grain, and that has been shown by a generality of price as much as \$5 a ton less than American corn although occasionally creeping up as high as \$3.50 a ton below the American corn price.

• (2220)

[Translation]

NATIONAL CAPITAL—INQUIRY AS TO PURCHASE OF
LASALLE ACADEMY

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa East): Mr. Speaker, on March 20 last, I asked the government, and in particular the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford), whether the historical LaSalle Academy building, which

[Mr. Gleave.]

is located in my constituency, had been purchased by the federal government, and if so, to what end?

We have since been informed that the government has purchased the building in question, and that it will carry out repair work with a view to preserving it, aging the exterior, that is, giving it its former look, and modernizing the interior to house the Department of Urban Affairs. Mr. Speaker, all who live in the national capital welcome the news that the building will be renovated and preserved.

There can be no doubt that this federal government purchase is a wise decision, in contrast, some would say, with the fate of the Rideau street convent. We are all aware of the great changes that are taking place in our city centres; we all agree that the old areas of our cities need redevelopment for the modern world. Unfortunately, our insatiable thirst for modernizing threatens the existence of many older buildings, to make room for bigger, more modern and often more profitable ones. Sometimes these soap box constructions are outstanding only for their ugliness, and they are sometimes sterile from their conception.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, the purchase of the LaSalle Academy by the federal government really fits in well with the program for the renovation of the west part of Lower Town; this program which bears the label "Centre Rideau" is part of Phase II of a complementary project doubtless intended as the counterpart of a similar project now under way in our twin city, Hull.

I rose, Mr. Speaker, not only to recognize the soundness of that purchase but also to point out the importance of the name LaSalle for generations of Canadians, Francophones as well as Anglophones in the Ottawa area, and to suggest to the government that the building should keep its name of LaSalle.

Built in 1852 by the bishop of Ottawa to lodge the Bytown College, later to become the Ottawa University, it became a hotel in 1856 where part of the Queen's 100th Regiment was billeted during the Fenian War; later, it was leased by the Ottawa Separate School Board to be used as a school by Notre Dame Parish, in Ottawa. The Brothers of Christian Schools had been teaching there since 1870. In 1889, they bought the building where they dispensed Christian and French teaching until 1971.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, for over 100 years the Brothers of Christian Schools have been giving quality teaching and pupils have been receiving serious and religious academic teaching. Being my Alma Mater, Mr. Speaker, I must say I deeply regret the disappearance of this institution which has been integrated into the Ontario secondary French public school system.

All the same, we rejoice that the building will remain, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that I express the wish of all the people of Ottawa, of the Academy alumni, of all the French-speaking and English-speaking people of Ottawa and Hull, who know that building under the name of LaSalle. I think I can rightly speak in their name and ask the government seriously to consider keeping the name of LaSalle for that building.

More and more, Mr. Speaker, citizens' groups conscious of the historical value of some old buildings not only fight