

seeds throughout the world. I cannot help but underline that too, when contributing to a debate about grain or oil seeds of any sort.

I think I said last night that Canada's contribution accounts for up to 25 per cent of the world's wheat export market—we usually range between 17 and 25 per cent of it, depending upon production in this country as well as in other parts of the world, even though we only produce 11 or 12 per cent of the world's wheat, consuming only a small part here and exporting the major part. We are, therefore, a major exporter of grain as well as of oil seeds, making them a very important factor in our economy.

I also said in the House yesterday that if it were not for grain and oil seeds, this country would already be a net importer of food; we would not be self-sufficient in the production of food for our own use, despite the vast acreage we have in Canada.

I had a chance to go over some government figures for last year and they showed that if you take away grain and oil seeds we would have a net deficit of \$1.5 billion for food. If you take the figures released by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Abbott) last Friday in the food strategy paper, we find that the deficit has increased over the last few months to about \$1.9 billion. We would not be able to feed ourselves in this country were it not for grain and oil seeds. That, Mr. Speaker, is why this debate is so important. It is important in terms of our balance of trade and in terms of supporting the Canadian dollar; it is important in terms of the type of food we produce and the manner in which we utilize the land acreage we have.

I want to remind the House, and particularly members from urban Canada, that this deficit is likely to grow. If we do nothing about reversing the trend in this country by setting aside land for the production of food, fostering our agricultural economy and becoming self-sufficient in more crops, then probably around the year 2,000, as the Science Council of Canada says, even with grain and with oil seeds we in Canada will not be able to feed ourselves. That is really a sad state of affairs.

We are already drifting in this country in the matter of food and agricultural policies. This is the point we must make as often as we can, from one part of the country to the other, until we can get the majority of the people, the government and the public service, to realize the situation, and draft a food policy which will plan the industry so that it will work for the benefit of all Canadians, including the farmers who produce the food.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain mentioned the big four in terms of the world grain trade—Bunge, Dreyfus, Cargill, and Continental. He also mentioned the fact that there isn't any great Canadian trader. He said something about the economics of international grain trade—I think these are things we should talk about in this debate. I know that my philosophy is different from his when it comes to how grain should be marketed and produced. He accused the hon.

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member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) of being a socialist. I personally hope that the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre is a socialist—if he is not then he belongs to the wrong party! I am a socialist myself and that is why I believe that individual producers have more freedom if they band together to market their grain through a grains board or through a wheat board.

What freedom is there for the little guy out there producing a crop if he has to depend on the futures market or on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange? I do not consider that to be freedom. It may be freedom for some of the big guys who can afford to gamble and take their losses, but it is certainly not freedom for the ordinary person in my constituency.

In my constituency we just came through a by-election last Wednesday. The Liberal campaign was based on freedom for people, freedom for farmers to make choices, the freedom of the individual. When the results came in, the NDP received almost 50 per cent of the votes; the Conservative party did not even get 30 per cent; and the Liberal party lost its deposit.

**An hon. Member:** That was because Otto was out there.

**Mr. Nystrom:** All the Conservative party got were Liberal votes—it was one free enterprise party voting for the other. It does not make much difference whether it is the Conservative party or the Liberal party that is in opposition. Maybe the only reason the Liberal party lost votes is that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) went out to campaign for them while the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) stayed home. That campaign, according to both the other parties, was based on individual freedom, and the farmers in my riding responded decisively with 48.4 per cent of the vote in the by-election, voting for the government party, the NDP. In a by-election voters usually take the opportunity to protest, so I am confident in a general election this party would do a lot better.

● (1130)

That is why I put forth the argument that all grains in this country should be marketed through the sole jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board where all farmers participate, pooling their risks and profits, working and co-operating together. That is the way to help the ordinary farmer and keep him on the land.

If that is a good idea for wheat, why is it not a good idea for some of the other grains? I do not hear many Conservatives or Liberals talking about getting rid of the Wheat Board. Some start picking away at the edges of the Canadian Wheat Board. It was the Conservative party that set it up, but that was after a great deal of pressure from all kinds of groups across the prairies. At one time there was a wheat board, but it was abolished in 1922, and then a voluntary wheat pool was set up in the place of the Canadian Wheat Board. The wheat pool which was set up on a voluntary basis was established in 1923 and fell apart in 1931. I think that was good evidence that voluntary pools do not work. This country has a history of voluntary pools not working at all.