

Feed Grains

usually receive from the minister in charge of the Wheat Board.

Mr. Lang: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Rose: Certainly.

Mr. Lang: I wonder whether the hon. member has the support of his colleagues from the farming communities of Saskatchewan and Manitoba who sit in this House with him when he suggests low prices and controls in respect of feed grains for animals. He is now asking for low prices. I wonder whether they support him.

Mr. Rose: I am pleased the minister said that because it indicates the level of his comprehension in response to anyone who speaks. I said that the broiler people who represent all feeders in that industry across the country wish to be assured of adequate feed grains for their industry at reasonable prices. They did not ask for a low price.

Mr. Lang: What is a reasonable price?

Mr. Rose: The minister asks what price is reasonable. Walter Reuther was asked a question like that by a group of industrialists. He was asked, what is a fair wage? He thought for a long while and said that it depends on whether you are getting it or paying it. That seems to be one of the problems. The problem is that one farmer is not getting it and the other farmer is paying it. If we can sort out that problem, I think we are well on the way to solving this crisis. We will not solve it by the kind of bland reassurance which we receive from the minister. All he has done is frighten the hell out of everybody in the country.

The Liberals should not think they can solve this problem by holding a conference of this kind at the Vancouver Hotel concerning national security. I suggest that their priorities are misplaced. My concern is for all feeders as well as the feeders in my province. However, dealing with the people in the interior of my province for a moment, they are concerned about an adequate supply. I do not know whether the minister knows about this. I am sure the Minister of Agriculture has some inkling of the problem.

● (2340)

The red meat producers in British Columbia have lost their industry. There is not a reasonably sized active packing house in my province any more. The feeders in the interior of my province want to be assured of decent supplies because they do not get any feed freight assistance, yet within 200 miles they have to compete with non-board grain in years of over supply, which is sold at a reasonable price. Consequently they are severely disadvantaged in terms of marketing their own cattle. They have to ship to Edmonton and Calgary. However, I am not concerned about that too much. I think British Columbia is fairly well endowed. Alberta, on the other hand, sends a preponderance of Conservatives here to Ottawa, and obviously any province like that needs some help. We have lost our red meat industry in the lower Fraser valley. If we do not find some solution to the feed grains problem we will also lose our broiler industry and our hog industry.

[Mr. Rose.]

When the Liberals were out in Vancouver recently they said they were concerned about the west. Why are you concerned? It is because you've got no members, and you won't get any members if you carry on like that.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Even if it is late the hon. member should respect some of the basic requirements of debate in the House of Commons, and one of them is to address the Chair.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I got carried away. As a matter of fact, some people insist that I should be carried away. With all respect, I suggest that I do respect some of the debating points in the House of Commons, and I regret you had to chide me for speaking directly to the minister rather than through the Chair. I accept your guidance and am grateful for it.

I don't know whether the minister cares or not, but this afternoon I took the trouble to phone some of the co-ops operating in my riding. The lower Fraser Valley is a declining agricultural area. I would like to put the blame on the minister for that, but I cannot. It is declining for a number of reasons, the major one because it is peripheral to a large urban area and so it suffers a kind of urban intrusion. At any rate there are some large co-ops operating within it. One is the Surrey Co-op. It has 6,000 or 8,000 members. I have a membership in one called the Otter Co-op, and my number is 5955. I asked them about this policy. They asked me what policy, and I replied the policy that I think we are going to get. I asked them, "What kind of policy do you want?"

The people I talked to are worried that feed grains may be taken out of the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board, and following upon that they are worried about what will happen to the Feed Freight Assistance Act. We have seen its provisions scaled down even since I have been a member of the House of Commons. That does not reassure anyone.

These people are waiting for a policy. In B.C. we should have an opportunity to get non-board grain. We have some, but we are in competition with the feeders in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These people would like to have the export rate, as applied to feed grain, applied to domestic grain. They feel that if we can ship it out west under the Crowsnest Pass rates and export it, feeders in my riding should be given an equal opportunity. They do not feel that the present situation is fair. They want the price to be equal across Canada so that all feeders and producers will have equal opportunities to produce at an efficient level of productivity.

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this feed grains debate tonight because it is easily the most important agricultural issue in Canada today. I wish to confine my remarks to the connection that the livestock industry, particularly the cattle industry, has with the feed grains industry. The beef cattle industry is easily the biggest commodity group in Canadian agriculture today.

Over the last three years we have seen this feed grains issue rage back and forth. The situation has gone from one extreme of over supply of wheat and feed grains to the