

Canadian Wheat Board Act

constituency have a great deal of confidence in the Wheat Board.

Question No. 6 asked: Do you feel rye, flax and rapeseed should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board? In response, 32 per cent said yes, 57 per cent said no and 11 per cent were undecided. I feel that questionnaire has given me a certain amount of guidance. Even if those who replied thought that rapeseed and the other grains should be brought under the Wheat Board, in view of their replies to question No. 5 I could not go along with the proposal because they did not think the Wheat Board was doing a good job.

I would be interested to know if the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville made a similar inquiry of the people he represents, because he might find them holding an opinion different from his. He shakes his head. I gather he has not made such a study.

Mr. Nystrom: Yes, I have.

Mr. Schumacher: He says he has.

Mr. Nystrom: And found very strong support for the Wheat Board.

Mr. Schumacher: During his remarks he did not make any reference to what that study revealed. This evening the hon. member for Vegreville referred to the performance of the Wheat Board in selling wheat. I suggest that until that board can produce some evidence that it is effective in marketing our major crop, there is little reason why we should give it more responsibility.

Mr. Nystrom: Would the hon. member be willing to accept a question?

Mr. Schumacher: Yes.

Mr. Nystrom: In view of the survey the hon. member has conducted in his constituency, can he say whether or not he is in favour of abolishing the Wheat Board, since in his opinion it is obviously doing such a bad job?

Mr. Schumacher: I do not think we should abolish the Wheat Board, but serious consideration could be given to reforming it. This kind of question strikes me as the type the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is so fond of asking people who are supposed to be asking him questions. I do not think it is useful in getting at the facts of the matter. I certainly would not be opposed to abolishing the Wheat Board, but I think there are certain positive steps that could be taken to make it an effective body. However, until those things are done no consideration should be given to increasing its jurisdiction.

Mr. Nystrom: May I ask the hon. member if I heard him correctly when he said he would not be opposed to abolishing the Wheat Board?

Mr. Schumacher: I think you did. I was attempting to say that I felt the Wheat Board should be retained, but that it should be reformed so that it could do the job it is supposed to do; and until it is reformed, rapeseed has no place under its jurisdiction. To use one of the govern-

[Mr. Schumacher.]

ment's favourite words, would it not be more reasonable to leave the Wheat Board to concentrate on selling wheat, hopefully with renewed vigour, rather than encumbering it with commodities that private individuals can handle to their own satisfaction, and here I mean the producers?

I am at a loss to discover what valid explanation the government can give to justify this intrusion. The government itself says that this legislation is not necessary and probably will not be used. It is this "probably" business that bothers me. The government has not found one yet and I am not sure it is even trying to find a bona fide reason to explain why we need to bring rapeseed under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board.

• (9:20 p.m.)

On Friday, May 7, the minister told the House that he was trying to maintain farming as a viable and effective way of life. If this is so—and I must take the minister's word that this is the government's intention although it is rather difficult at times to see concrete evidence of it, then they are certainly going about it in the wrong way. As reported at page 5603 of *Hansard*, the minister had this to say:

It is very true that it is our belief that we should try to assure that the total system, where the government has any control, should be made as effective as possible to maximize returns to those involved in farming. I want to state, as a fundamental matter of our philosophy, that we do not in any way have the view that anyone should be made to move off a farm if he chooses to live on it.

Perhaps this is an admirable philosophy but I can only remark again that the government is not going about it in the right way. If people are making a success of growing rapeseed, why not leave them alone? They have entered a profitable market on their own initiative. What could be more discouraging and calculated to drive people off the farm than this unwarranted intrusion which is fated to reduce their freedom and to impose quotas on their crops? If they can now sell all they can grow, then I say all power to them—the economy needs more success stories like this. But this government cannot seem to leave well enough alone.

I note with interest that the minister said "where the government has any control". It would seem that the government does not want "any" power; it wants "all" the power. It seems that the government is intent on giving assistance to the farming community. The catch is, it does not matter whether they want it or not. The government wants to standardize and stabilize. Do they want to standardize our freedoms so that the farming community is completely under their thumb?

It must be obvious what they want to do. While the minister said that he did not want to see farmers leaving the land unless they wanted to, the government's program seemed to state that while people may be able to stay on the land, it will be at a very reduced standard of living. Offering support to those who have not made a success of farming, on condition that after they have gone the farm will be forced to become part of a larger unit or to become Crown land again, does not seem to