

Government Orders

available for eastern producers in marketing their grain in overseas markets both in terms of credit, forgiveness, flexibility and all the rest.

Has he been able to take any action on the recommendations and the representations made by those five groups in Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the commodity council, the corn producers, the soybean producers and the Ontario Wheat Growers Association?

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes a good point with the last point he makes.

We certainly do not want to see one producer in one part of the country treated differently or have an advantage over one in another part of the country simply because of the way things are organized on his behalf.

We have, as far as CIDA criteria, made CIDA aware. It has agreed to use specifications when it tenders for oilseeds so that it can include soybeans and not just canola oil. I think that is a step in the right direction.

I have had a chance to meet with the Ontario Wheat Growers. There have been occasions when it has expressed concern about the matter which the member raises concerning aid. If it has some direct concerns, we will take them up and do the very best we can to address them.

People outside of the Wheat Board area—it would be the same for canola in western Canada and flax, for instance, that were to be exported which were not under the board—make sure where they can that the EDC is as accommodating with non-board sales as the Wheat Board is able to be with board sales as a result of government involvement. Having said that, it is maybe not that easy to accomplish but we have to work at it and make sure that where we can, we see that there is no difference.

I should point out that I remember when we signed a long-term grain sales agreement with Egypt four or five years ago. The Canadian Wheat Board signed it but Egypt had an interest in Ontario wheat. At the ceremony, we had Bob Holmes who was president of the Ontario Wheat Growers at the time, make sure that Egypt knew that while the Wheat Board was signing a long-term grain sales agreement, there was interest in

other parts of the country in selling to Egypt. We had an opportunity to see that the Ontario Wheat Growers were represented at that signing ceremony.

I would also point out that the \$150 million line of credit that has been offered to the Soviet Union has been there for some time now. There has been interest in Ontario corn as far as that line of credit is concerned and I think that will be the major grain that will be involved in terms of that line of credit. There is an example where Ontario corn growers will be able to take advantage of a specific line of credit that again should help producers.

The member makes a good point. Other than offering him and other people in Ontario who are exporting our full co-operation and being as accommodating as possible, I do not know what I could do.

I should point out to the member and I am sure he is aware, that when we assumed office in 1984 one of the first things we did as government was to host a meeting of the five major wheat exporters, namely the United States, the Community, Argentina, Australia and ourselves. We hosted that at Whistler on the west coast. There was a second meeting, a follow-up, that the Americans called. We very much wanted to see if there were ways to co-operate, not to necessarily form a cartel but a way of seeing that if we are going to compete that we do so in a rational basis so that everybody benefits.

I do not think consumers of grain around the world are going to benefit if in fact prices that they pay farmers to produce that product are so low that the farmers go out of business. We very much wanted to continue that dialogue. Unfortunately after the first two meetings, the one that we hosted to get the meetings going in Canada and the one we had in the United States, nobody has seen fit to call another meeting.

One of the things we have been thinking about is to try to get another meeting like that going. I think we are going to have to wait until the GATT process concludes either successfully or unsuccessfully, but I certainly think there are ways in which we can co-operate. One of the things we are going to be encouraging the International Wheat Council to do is to take a more active role and do something other than simply collecting and disseminating statistics. I think it has a role to trying to work with various countries and do the things that the member