

Withholding of Grain Payments

because it would mean the government would be free of any payout to western farmers for an indefinite period unless a disaster occurred.

Prospects for the coming crop year do not appear very bright for Canadian grain sales. The minister made a statement about record sales of grain, but they are at record low prices. A quarter of our wheat has been sold on extended credit, which is valuable and useful, but it is not an assured market. Barley sales, which made up the vast bulk of the bushel increase, have had to be made at an extremely low price. We are glad they were made at all, but the impression should not be left that the dollar value of these sales is anything like the value it has been during the last 20 years. In the announcement of the sale to China the day before yesterday there was no indication of price. We do not know at what price sales are being made to these countries.

The enormous Canadian barley crop together with the enormous American corn crop leads to the possibility of a very depressed feed grain market. Almost certainly the same situation will arise wherein barley and other feed grain will be sold in the so-called blackmarket by farmers needing cash. It would seem advisable that we remove the restrictions on the movement of feed grains between provinces. I believe they should be eliminated in all the provinces which make up the Wheat Board's designated area. If the removal of the restrictions to the free flow of feed grains across provincial boundaries at first created hardship and dislocation, it could be done gradually. The removal of this artificial restriction on the movement of feed grains in all of Canada would lessen the demand for the protection of eastern meat producers through restrictive bills such as C-176. The member whom we just heard mentioned that this legislation helped the dairy industry. I hope it has helped someone; it has moved the dairy industry out of western Canada and, presumably, into his province. It may have helped his province but it did not help the over-all dairy industry in western Canada. That is what a political board will always have to do.

The ability of the eastern feeder to obtain feed grain at a price that is competitive with his western counterpart should lessen the fear that he will be deluged by hogs, eggs, broilers and turkeys from western Canada in times of a feed grain glut. Such a move would counter the latest attempt to solve the chicken-and-egg war where the proposed solution calls for marketing boards in each province to put tight controls on production and divide up Canada's market by agreement. In effect, this new effort will achieve the very thing that the Supreme Court ruling called illegal, namely, restrict the movement of poultry products across provincial boundaries and chop up Canada's domestic market into ten political pieces.

The implications of the agreement could be far reaching indeed. The agreement means that the federal government has virtually abandoned its responsibilities to provide leadership to Canada's poultry industry, and apparently the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) has assured producers that U.S. eggs will be kept out of Canada. So in effect provincial marketing boards will

[Mr. Ritchie.]

control and restrict all producers, so that Canada will no longer be a single poultry market and provincial governments will control the industry. The end result of this move seems bleak. It would deny Canada's poultry access to the huge United States market and condemn the producers to live in an inward-looking industry. It would commit them to an endless hassle in dividing up a market that is already too small. This development places the farmer in an unenviable position and makes him doubt the value of attempting to improve production marketing. If Canadian agriculture is forced to look only to the Canadian market for growth, it will indeed be restricted.

Mr. Speaker, the whole of this government's agricultural policy has been restrictive in nature. It has earned for the minister the title "Ottoman emperor of the Wheat Board," because of its restrictions and quotas. Payment of the \$100 million should have been made through the farm stabilization program or to the Wheat Board so that it could be distributed to our farmers.

A final point, Mr. Speaker. The minister said that the government was looking at the movement of grain out of Canada through west coast ports. I shall read a news release issued by the Palliser Wheat Growers Association:

Belle Plaine, August 17—Grain cleaning is still the big holdup at west coast terminal elevators, says Gordon Brooks, a Belle Plaine district farmer after a trip to Vancouver last week.

"We spoke to workers at one of the largest terminals," Mr. Brooks said "and asked them to tell us what sets the limit on the amount of grain that can be loaded on ships in a day. They told us it was because the grain had to be cleaned."

Mr. Brooks and his family also talked to the crew of a Greek ship loading wheat for China, and asked one of them, who could speak a bit of English, how long they had had to wait before they started loading. They were told that the ship had been in harbour for five days before getting to the loading dock, and "didn't like to come to Vancouver" because they always had to wait.

● (11:00 p.m.)

Terminal workmen said that there were plenty of boxcars to unload, and no shortage of ships waiting for Canadian grain, and that although the cleaning operations were running 24 hours a day, the loading crews only worked two shifts.

I commend that release to the minister. I hope he looks into this and does all he can to improve grain handling facilities. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to debate this urgent and important issue that affects not hundreds but thousands of people in my riding.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Little did I dream that I would live to see the day that any government would become so arrogant, so dictatorial and have such a callous disregard for the laws of Canada as this present government. Its failure to pay out moneys under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act to the account of the Canadian Wheat Board in the interests of the financially hard pressed wheat farmers of western Canada leaves this government completely indicted in the eyes of all Canadians.