

*Wheat Sales*

and will give the farmer a price relatively close to what he can receive from the feeders.

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I had for a time thought that the full year might go by without one opposition motion on grain and agriculture. It had become very common to have one approximately every week or so a few years ago. This year it took a long time for the opposition to decide they could, in fact, frame a motion adequate to their purpose.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

● (1550)

**Mr. Lang:** Having framed the motion, the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) decided today to speak essentially about a rather different subject. I rechecked the order paper to be sure I had it right, and I see that he condemns the minister responsible and the government for failing to maximize wheat sales at top world prices.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lang:** But speaking to it today, he said that he was moving a motion criticizing us for interfering in the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board. The interesting point about that, of course, is that the only way we could be active in maximizing wheat sales at top world prices would be by giving directions to the Canadian Wheat Board about selling, whereas it is our constant practice to leave the selling decisions to the board. Under the Canadian Wheat Board Act, they have the obligation to attempt to maximize benefits for the Canadian farmers.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** Intellectual socialism.

**Mr. Lang:** I would point out that having initially in his motion invited us to interfere, later in speaking he condemned us for interfering. Of course, the fact of the matter is that the motion is a thinly veiled continuation of the attack by certain members of the Conservative party upon the Canadian Wheat Board itself.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lang:** The hon. member for Crowfoot is rarely willing to come out and say flatly that he is an out and out open marketer, and that he would prefer the Canadian Wheat Board not to exist. He is afraid to say that, although I am not sure that his brother, who is in another legislature, is as afraid. That, of course, is a very interesting and fundamental fact about which farmers are concerned when they look at the agriculture program of the Conservative party.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** I rise on a question of privilege. One cannot impute motives to others for what they say or what they do. If at any time I have said anything against the Canadian Wheat Board, I would like the minister to quote it to me. I have always stood up for the Wheat Board.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is a point of debate. The minister has the floor, and perhaps he should be allowed to make his speech.

[Mr. Horner (Crowfoot).]

**Mr. Baldwin:** He is destroying the Wheat Board by burrowing from without.

**Mr. Stanfield:** The minister is never concerned about facts.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Be truthful, Otto.

**Mr. Lang:** The Canadian Wheat Board has, by statute, the obligation to sell grain delivered to it by farmers and to attempt, in its best judgment and to the best of its ability, to obtain the best terms for farmers for that grain. This is the work that it has done, and so long as I have anything to do with it it will continue to do so in the interest of Canadian farmers.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** Tell us about Operation Lift.

**Mr. Baldwin:** That is not what the farmers say.

**Mr. Lang:** The hon. member for Crowfoot, like so many members from his party, likes to be first and strongest with hindsight in saying that we should have known that an earlier price was not, in fact, the best possible price. This is where his insidious attack upon the Wheat Board's operations really comes in. I would like to point out to him that the extremely important judgment about when to sell grain, at what price, is the same difficult judgment whether it is made by the Wheat Board on behalf of all Canadian farmers or by individual farmers themselves. It is the judgment of the farmers of the prairie region that it is better to leave that important decision to the Canadian Wheat Board in the case of wheat, barley and oats than to take it themselves.

**Mr. Horner (Crowfoot):** I agree.

**Mr. Lang:** That is also the case with oilseeds. I have said that to the hon. member for Crowfoot time and time again. We in this government have not, and will not, interfere with any of the decisions of the Canadian Wheat Board in relation to the selling of wheat on a particular contract, in relation to when it should sell it and at what prices it should sell it. Indeed, I will say to the hon. member more than that. I believe that the commissioners of the Canadian Wheat Board would not agree to function under circumstances in which that obligation placed upon them under the act was interfered with by us. When, from time to time, we are able to give direction to the Canadian Wheat Board upon their activities, we must do so by order in council under the Canadian Wheat Board Act. I will remind hon. members that this kind of direction and comment in relation to certain Canadian Wheat Board activities has been quite common over the period of years. When the Conservatives were last in power the Bracken formula was devised as a matter of government policy, and imposed quite properly as a policy relating to something extraneous to the Wheat Board and willingly accepted by them.

The question of the quota system was discussed in the parliamentary committee to determine whether sales to feed mills should or should not be under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board. Again this was a matter of policy. In the same way, many of the areas which are extremely important to the Wheat Board and which are matters of