

News from Ottawa

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and organizing ability, which, I think is not the least qualification necessary to the work. In the hands of that commission, made as independent as a commission can be made, will be placed the whole control, supervision and work, which is now entrusted to the different officers of the government. The government also takes power in this act to expropriate, to construct and to lease terminal elevators to the end that the selfish interest which it has heretofore been declared has worked against the interests of the farmer shall be eliminated as far as possible and such terminal elevators when constructed, or built or leased, will be run by the commission. It will be their business to operate these elevators in addition to discharging the duties which are now placed upon the officers who are carrying out the act as it has been on the Statute book."

Government and Commission

When the details of the bill were taken up, however, it became apparent that the board's powers are restricted by the frequent occurrence of the clause, "by and with the consent of the governor-in-council." Dr. Neeley pointed to section 20, covering "regulations" and declared that the inclusion of these words in the clause did not permit the same latitude to the commissioners as was given by the bill of last year. He called attention to the fact that the Manitoba Grain Growers when recently in session had passed a very strong resolution regarding both interior and terminal elevators. The government of Manitoba had been called upon to place its elevator commission on an absolutely independent basis. The Grain Growers also asked for the same thing in regard to the commissioners who would be appointed under this bill. The bill would not meet the demands of the farmers who asked for a commission with control over the grain trade similar to the control exercised by the railway commission over matters affecting transportation. Dr. Neeley went on to say that if the board is to be of any value, it should, by intimate knowledge of the situation, be better fitted to make proper and necessary rules and regulations than the government. In the construction of this commission there should be no question of interference in the administration of the situation at the terminals. If everything had to be referred to Ottawa, the situation, he said, would be worse than under present conditions, and it would be as well not to appoint the board.

Meighen Against Independent Commission

Arthur Meighen, after some little cross-firing with Dr. Neeley as to what would constitute an "independent" commission stated frankly that he would not approve of anything that would place the commission in a position where they would be independent of the government. Neither would he approve of such a thing in provincial legislation, the principle being too vital and too sacred. The commission, he averred, must be responsible to the government, and the government must be responsible for the work of administration. He thought that Dr. Neeley's principal idea was to embarrass the government. Mr. Oliver said there was no doubt that the people who were looking for the passage of this legislation, along the lines indicated by Dr. Neeley, have in their minds an ideal condition under which there would be a board to deal with the grain question which would be absolutely independent of politics. While it was desirable that the House should conform to that ideal as far as practicable, he did not know that it could be absolutely carried out and still have a bill which would work satisfactorily. The House, he said, should again have the opportunity of discussing the matter on the third reading.

End in Anarchy

Mr. Foster, after noting that Mr. Oliver approached the question a little differently from Dr. Neeley, said that this was doubtless due to the circumstance that the ex-minister had more experience in government work. Dr. Neeley had caught at an ideal and pressed it to a conclusion which to his mind might end in anarchy. It would be possible to give too much power and make the commission too independent. In the end the government must be responsible. It was the

intention of the bill to give the commissioners even more power than was proposed under the bill of last session. The old bill left appointments absolutely to the minister. Under the present bill the recommendations would come from the board itself.

Mr. Knowles failed to see what justification there would be for asking that a board located in Fort William should, during the rush season, send down to Ottawa to have their regulations endorsed by the government. The members of the railway board were left to their own discretion in these matters, and why not this board which would control the great grain trade? Nothing should be done to impede business. The government could be safe-guarded by providing an appeal to the governor-in-council as is done under the Railway Act.

Mr. Foster in reply said that the government had always to consider the possibility of something creeping in that should not be allowed. He would not, he said, like to place the grain commission on exactly the same plane as the railway board, because, for power and scope of jurisdiction, the latter board did not find its equal in the world.

Mr. Oliver laid considerable stress on the fact that the judgments of the railway board affect a few corporations, but that this board would control the grain trade of Canada, which Sir Byron Walker places at \$200,000,000 a year. He combatted Mr. Foster's contention that the bill would give the commissioners greater power than the bill of last year. Clause 20, of last year's bill gave the commissioners more power to act on their own initiative under conditions of stress and carried out the idea of an independent board to a greater degree than does the present bill. He impressed upon the minister the necessity of giving the board power to take action under conditions of stress without a reference to Ottawa.

W. F. Maclean, the only Eastern member to take part in the discussion, said it would be sufficient if there was a clause providing that any time the government could review and recall any act of the commission. "Put the responsibility on these men. If they do not do their work satisfactorily, appoint better men," he said. He could not see why a minister should occupy half his time in putting a rubber stamp on the acts of a commission appointed to do something.

Will Reconsider

It was finally agreed to let the section pass, the minister agreeing to consider the suggestions made with a view to a possible reconsideration.

On Thursday there was a long and absolutely non-partisan discussion on the clauses dealing with the inspection of grain. The question of a sample market was thoroughly discussed. In reply to a question by Dr. Neeley, who advocated a sample market at Winnipeg, the minister informed the House that the Grain Growers now in the capital want the terminal elevators owned and operated by the government before a sample market is established.

W. D. Staples said that in his opinion the majority of the farmers of the West are anxious to have a sample market and that it would mean a great deal to the producer. A technical discussion followed, there being a general agreement that there is no harm in mixing grain before a certificate is issued but that it should not be allowed after the grade has been fixed.

Consideration of the remaining clauses of the bill will probably take several days.

Terminal Elevator Question

In introducing the terminal elevator question at the Brandon convention R. McKenzie said an appointment had been made for a conference between representatives of the Grain Growers and members of the government at Ottawa to discuss the Canada Grain Bill which was before the House of Commons. The president, Mr. Henders, and himself had arranged to leave for Ottawa immediately at the close of the convention and it was necessary that they be given instructions as to the stand they were to take in the interests of the grain growers. The first point discussed involved the independence of the proposed board of grain commissioners and came up under section 8, which provides that every officer and employee attached to or under the authority of the board shall be appointed by the minister of trade and commerce. It was felt that if the board was to be independent it must have the power to

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make its own appointments and also to dismiss its employees, and a resolution was passed instructing the representatives of the association to ask for an amendment giving the commission this power. A similar point was raised under section 20 of the bill, which provides that, "The board may, with the consent of the governor in council, make rules and regulations for the government, control, licensing and bonding of terminal and other elevators, and all other matters necessary to the proper carrying out of this act." It was pointed out that this gives the government, and not the board, control in the making of regulations, and it was unanimously agreed to ask for an amendment of the section to make it read "with or without the consent of the governor in council."

Special Binning and Certificates

The bill provides for the leasing of special bins at the terminals for the purpose of preserving the identity of grain in transit, from December 15 each year to September 15 in the following year, and it was decided to ask that this provision be made operative throughout the year.

Mr. McKenzie said the government had not yet announced its intentions with regard to taking over the terminal elevators, but it had been stated that they proposed to require the railway companies to operate the elevators which they owned as public storage elevators, the government acquiring certain elevators for the same purpose and the remaining terminals to be left in the hands of their owners for the storage of their own grain only.

After some discussion the following resolution was unanimously carried:

"That this convention reaffirms its former attitude with regard to terminal elevators and expresses its conviction that nothing short of the operation of all terminal elevators at the lake front by the government, either by purchase or lease, will meet the requirements of the Western grain trade, and that in order to facilitate the establishment of a sample market special bins should be provided in the said terminal elevators, which

may be leased and used by purchasers of grain on the sample market, but that grain which has been stored in such special bins shall be graded out on a special form of certificate differentiating such grain from grain which has been stored in public bins."

Grain Standards

A resolution in favor of the revision of the Grain Act to make the Manitoba grades conform with those prevailing in Minnesota had been sent in by Huston, Valley River, and Crystal City branches. Mr. McKenzie pointed out that if the Minnesota system was adopted all wheat below No. 4 would be graded rejected, which he thought would not be in the interests of the producer. The matter was referred to the executive, and later, on the motion of Peter Wright, seconded by J. Russell, it was resolved to ask for the amendment of the present law by striking out the words "red life" from the specifications of No. 1 hard and Nos. 1 and 2 northern so as to make them read "— per cent. of hard wheat."

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Question Drawer

This department of The Guide is open to all readers, and it is hoped that they will take advantage of it. All questions relating to the problems of the farmer of Western Canada will be answered in this department. Write questions on one side of the paper only, and send on y one question on one sheet of paper. Join in making this department of the greatest value.

MUST HAVE NAMES

Questions sent in with the name of the sender attached will not be answered. The name will not be used if not desired, but it must be sent in as a guarantee of good faith.

RENTING ON SHARES

Ques.—I am leasing my farm, horses and implements, also supplying seed, lessee to perform all labor and receive one third of crop. Please say in your paper what proportion of threshing and twine expenses I should bear.

Ans.—Two-thirds.