

Canada Grain Act

I imagine that if I were responsible for operating a grain company I would probably be rather uneasy if I felt that the government, by Order in Council, could change the requirements of grades for the grain that was sitting in the elevator system. That is a pretty heavy stick to hold, covering flax, rapeseed and barley. I think that those regulations and standards should be known.

I do not understand why the Board of Grain Commissioners and the government, with the experience and the knowledge they have, cannot at this time make definite recommendations to the House as to the protein standards that should be used, and why such recommendations cannot be put before the House rather than the suggestion by the minister that in due course, if advisable, when it is thought right, when the time has come, we may use protein grading. It should be enconced in this bill if it is going to be a part of the grading system, and it should be part of the grading system. Everybody agrees with this.

Mr. Olson: It will be.

Mr. Gleave: If you were in England, as I was last week, and talked to people on both the purchasing side and the selling side, you could come to only one conclusion, that we should not be thinking just of protein grading today but we should have been thinking of it yesterday, or a year or two ago. It is difficult for me to understand why it is not in the bill and why this Parliament cannot consider it, pass on it and judge the effect it will have on the ordinary farmer.

I have not got too much confidence in Orders in Council over this whole scope of activity. The minister may smile, but when I see a government go out, as this one has, and propose the things it has proposed to the farmers of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba within the last month, I think it would have been a lot better if it had been obliged to come to Parliament and put an act through this House. If so, it would not be making the blunders that it will have to live with in the very near future and with which unfortunately the farmers will also have to live. By bringing these matters before the House for full discussion, protection could be provided for the farmers. That, to a large extent, takes care of the points which I wanted to make in regard to this bill.

There is too much Order in Council and not enough real protection for the producer, and the two are not mutually exclusive. We had

[Mr. Gleave.]

both under the old act. For example, as this bill now reads, if a farmer has grain of a certain grade and quality, is the elevator company at the point at which he has his quota obliged to take that grain, or not? The act is not clear in this regard. It says that the commissioners may decide whether that elevator has to take his grain. But the commissioners are in Winnipeg, and he is on an elevator ramp somewhere out in the country.

● (9:50 p.m.)

These were the rights under the old act, and I think they are not now stated clearly enough so that the farmer's rights are protected. If this is so, of course it will also affect the elevator companies. While they would like to take as much leeway as they can, I still think they would prefer to operate under an act wherein the rules of the game are clearly set down, rather than under an act where they know the rules can be changed.

In regard to a check-off on grain, I am prepared to discuss such a matter when the government chooses to bring it in and when they put concrete proposals before this House or the Standing Committee on Agriculture. The same would apply to protein grading. I do not know how we can discuss this matter when there is no provision in the act for any such thing.

Mr. Olson: You could make a concrete proposal.

Mr. Gleave: I could, but I do not know why I should, Mr. Speaker. In the offices of the Board of Grain Commissioners are charts which have been prepared for a good many years showing the protein pattern all across that Prairie region—

Mr. Olson: I mean with a check-off.

Mr. Gleave:—so why should I batter my brains out to try and put it before this House when the minister has all that high-priced help and could have had it here this evening? I am ready to discuss protein grading when the minister brings it in to this House. I hope when that occurs that the minister or some of his aides will have something concrete to offer on the subject. I hope they will be prepared to say that this or that proposal could go into the act, and not leave us to do it all on our own.

There is one other matter which might be worth mentioning in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and this concerns the new