

*Canada Grain Act***CANADA GRAIN ACT**AMENDMENT TO REVISE DEFINITION
OF "ELEVATOR"

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat) moved the second reading of Bill No. C-70, to amend the Canada Grain Act (Off-track elevator licensing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the intent of Bill C-70 is very simple. It is to amend the Canada Grain Act by dropping the words in the second line "directly from or into railway cars or vessels". Under the definition of an elevator in the Canada Grain Act it is specified that no licence can be granted to an elevator unless the elevator is in a position where western grain may be received, or out of which it may be discharged, directly from or into railway cars or vessels. There are some further provisions.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this definition of "an elevator" needs to be changed, particularly in view of the proposed railway abandonment or rationalization program which may come into being as a result of the passage of Bill No. C-120. I am not sure whether it is well known to hon. members of this house that there was a period of time when it was possible for the board of grain commissioners to license an elevator whether it was located along a railroad track or not, but since the adoption of the amendment to the act inserting the words "directly from or into railway cars or vessels," it has been impossible and unlawful to license an elevator unless it is located alongside a railway line.

There is a very useful purpose to be served by an elevator in this day and age, 1964, whether or not it is located beside a railway line. As an example of this I could refer to many small towns where all, or almost all, of the grain is delivered to the elevator and taken out of the elevator by motor truck transport. While there are railway lines located in these towns, very little use is made of them for the movement of grain. If the provisions contained in the Canada Grain Act were enforced, unless those elevators were standing alongside a railway track it would not be possible for the elevator to be licensed.

I am certain that in years to come, particularly if there is a large scale program of railway line abandonment undertaken, motor truck transport is going to play an increasingly important part in the movement of grain. We might as well recognize this fact now so that it will be possible for an elevator to be licensed, whether or not it is located adjacent to a railway line.

Perhaps there would not be a great amount of grain moved from these elevators by motor truck transport for export, yet when one considers the economics and the cost of maintaining some of these branch lines solely for the purpose of carrying grain in boxcars as opposed to short movements by motor transport and then into railway cars, it becomes fairly obvious that some substantial savings can be effected by the use of motor truck transport.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to spend a great amount of time advocating the acceptance of this bill because it is completely obvious that it needs to be amended for the reasons I have suggested, but I hope if the government is not prepared to accept this amendment today it will at least be prepared to refer the subject matter to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, so that it can be considered at the same time as that portion of Bill C-120 which relates to railway line abandonment.

I could spend some considerable time outlining the history of this licensing practice, and give many examples of the beneficial results of off-track storage, particularly in the early 1950's, but I am not as interested in what has happened regarding these elevators in the past as I am in what may happen in the future. I know that the three western wheat pools and some of the line elevator companies have advanced as one of their arguments against the abandonment of any branch lines this particular section of the act which would in fact mean the revoking of their licences if the lines were abandoned. However, I am one of those who believe that while we cannot have wholesale abandonment of railway lines we must face up to the fact that some of them are not being used for any other purpose than to haul a very small amount of grain. If we want to be practical and realistic we have to recognize that some of these lines are going to be abandoned because they are not being used for hauling l.c.l. or local freight any more, or for passenger service or for carrying the mail. Therefore it just does not make common sense to maintain them for the hauling of a very small amount of grain.

Before anyone misunderstands me let me say that this applies to a very few railway lines, and the argument I am trying to make is that even though those railway lines are rolled up and abandoned the elevators now situated in some of these small towns could serve a very useful purpose if the board of grain commissioners would license them. The