

*Canada Grain Act*

only be taken away by Parliament. We recognize the minister's plea for flexibility, but I think he has carried it too far in this act.

It is said in the act that we shall have certain commissioners, who may appoint certain assistant commissioners. Do we need them, or do we not? If they are essential, the bill should read that certain assistant commissioners shall be appointed. If we do not need them, why should this be mentioned in the act? Was it not possible for those who drafted the act to make up their minds whether or not they needed assistant commissioners?

The act does not cover new ground. We are not dealing with a subject which is unknown. This act, or rather its predecessor which this bill replaces, has been in effect for a long time. We know how many elevators have to be supervised. Therefore, we should know how many people it takes to supervise them. We should know whether it is advisable to supervise them with the aid of assistant commissioners or with other staff. As I read the act, it will change the character of our method of handling grain so that we may mix grades under the supervision of the commissioner. This was not permitted under the old act. I suggest that considerable pressure will be put on the commissioners once this act comes into effect to permit mixing within the terms of the act.

All those who are experienced in grain handling know that under these circumstances the tendency is to mix down to the minimum of the grade, which does not always work in the interests of what is desirable for the quality of Canadian wheat. I question whether this power needs to be in the hands of the commissioner. Again, if I read the act correctly, it is proposed that wherever excessive overages occur, they can come back to the Canadian Wheat Board or the Board of Grain Commissioners. This, of course, is a protection, and as far as that goes it is overdue. In the country elevator system we permit the elevator companies to keep whatever they might make. Under these changes it is proposed that if the terminal elevators make something in excess, we will take it away from them. That may be some protection, but I am still somewhat leary of the proposal that permits mixing in terminal elevators.

● (9:40 p.m.)

The bill also makes substantial changes in regard to the right of the individual to order cars. It does away with the car order book because it has been said that this will no longer work with the block system. But

where does it leave the ordinary farmer with regard to getting cars? Again, as I read the bill, in the final analysis he must go to the Board of Grain Commissioners if he wants a car.

The minister should concern himself with this factor. I had a carload of flax that sat in the elevator for over a month while I ordered a car to ship it, and if I had not let it sit I would have lost the value of the screenings that were in the flax. So I held it until eventually I could get a car. In the meantime, the price was going up and down and I was paying storage on the flax. When I said to the elevator agent, "Look, I want a car to haul my flax," he replied, "All I can do is phone Edmonton. They tell me what I am going to get as far as cars are concerned and I cannot argue back. It is a one-way line, and until they decide to send me down a car, your flax will have to sit in the elevator." I must say that I did not attempt to make any extra effort to do something about it, but the farmer's right to get a car and to move his product to the market when and as he wants should be protected in this bill. I doubt that his right is protected in it at present.

Under the old Canada Grains Act we had that right with the car order book. It may not have been protected under present conditions with the block system, and so on, and it may be that the car order book could not effectively protect the farmer's right, but I do not think his right is protected in the short references that are made to it in this bill. This is important because he is the lone individual in a very highly organized grain handling system, and if Parliament does not protect his rights you may be very sure he will sing a long time to the Board of Grain Commissioners or to the elevator companies to get his rights protected. This is one matter to which very careful consideration should be given, and I hope the government will look at it. The new provisions appear to provide for adequate inspection. Of course, we will have a chance to go into this in some depth when the bill is examined by the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I say there is an excess of Order in Council in this bill, and we are not writing enough provisions for the protection of the farmer. We are not writing enough provisions so that the rights of the farmer will stand clear and without question and so that it will be stipulated which grades will remain and which will be standard under the legislation.