

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: I do not think they were consulted or even gave any thought to the Act applying to them—did they, Mr. Bryce?—I do not think they were even considered as being a type of corporation which should be brought under it.

Mr. FRASER: But the question was, did they object; do you think they would have objected to being included?

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: I do not think they would care—I don't know, I really don't know. But, frankly, it does not seem to me appropriate that this particular corporation, which is almost unique in Canada, should come under this general rule dealing with agencies of the crown who are performing functions of one sort or another for the government and which are handling public money. This is a special type of corporation formed for the purpose of marketing producers' wheat and its powers are covered by a special statute. It is required to report through the minister to parliament. There is every opportunity if parliament cares to insist that its affairs should be examined into most carefully by parliament. Really, I find it hard to see what particular advantage would be gained by including it in this schedule, even if it were desirable on other grounds to do so.

Mr. WRIGHT: I will tell you why it would be an advantage. I have always been strongly in favour of the wheat board, and it has done an excellent job, in my opinion, for the growers of western Canada; but I would like to see confidence built up in it. There are those who say: well, the wheat board's annual statement gets practically no consideration, it is tabled in the House; it is not examined; and they use that against the board. Now, I would like to see the board placed in a position where their yearly statements receive close consideration, where there is a chance to question the board, and where the board has a chance to justify the actions they have taken during the year; and I think that could be done by having them appear before a committee of the House each year.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: That is a matter for parliament; it is entirely free to do that.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think that if they were under this Crown Corporations Act that would be an additional safeguard for them.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: If they were included in this Act that would not insure that their report would be brought before the committee at all.

Mr. WRIGHT: Oh, I know, not at the present time; but, if we as a committee recommend that the crown corporations in schedules "C" and "D" submit their reports to the House and that they be referred by the House to a committee then the wheat board would, naturally, being one of these corporations, go before a committee of the House. I think it was the general opinion of this committee—if that opinion has not been changed since this afternoon—that a recommendation would go to the House similar to the one which was made last year. I may say that my only reason for asking that the wheat board be included is to protect the board itself against those who make certain statements about it.

Mr. JUTRAS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I must say that I cannot see how Mr. Wright's purpose would be served by putting the wheat board in with the crown corporations. There is nothing here which says that these crown corporations must go to a committee. That is a matter which must be left to the House, and should the House decide that a report should be considered by a committee then I would assume it would be referred to a committee. As the matter stands, I doubt very much the wisdom of including the wheat board in this part of the Act because actually during the last few years what we have been trying to do is to get the wheat board in the best possible