

National Harbours Board Act

Churchill season there are times when it is necessary to ship grain that has already been cleaned to speed up loading in the port. When this occurs the elevator at Saskatoon is used for this purpose, and last year the Canadian wheat board moved about 1,400,000 bushels of wheat—

Mr. Rapp: May I ask a question?

Mr. Sharp: Certainly.

Mr. Rapp: That is exactly what the trouble was over the years when we had surpluses. Instead of the wheat board filling government elevators, they filled the elevators of others who handled their own grain to the lakehead so that they could save money. At that time I think it was the fault of the government, and the two elevators in Edmonton and Saskatoon were never filled to capacity. That is the reason why only 600,000 bushels were exported through Saskatoon annually.

Mr. Sharp: May I say that the point that I was going to come to was that these 1,400,000 bushels of wheat that were cleaned in Saskatoon cost the Canadian wheat board $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents per bushel. This cost is made up of a stop-off charge by the railways of 3 cents per hundredweight or about 1.8 cents per bushel, an elevation charge of a cent and a half and an inspection and weighing charge of \$4 a car or about two tenths of a cent per bushel. Naturally because of this added cost the board tries to minimize as far as possible the necessity of moving wheat from Saskatoon but in order to maximize the total Churchill movement it is necessary to make use of Saskatoon. The building of an elevator at Tisdale would thus be a duplication of an elevator already in existence, use of which adds to the cost of handling western Canadian wheat and the use of which is minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

The final reason for my doubts about the wisdom of this proposal is that if additional elevator space is to be built in Canada it seems to me it could be erected in a more favourable location. Hon. members know that one of the great changes that has taken place in the movement of grain has been the development of markets in the Far East.

Mr. Rapp: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to interrupt the minister but he referred to a more favourable location. This is the reason we in the northern part of Saskatchewan would like to see a terminal built there, because during the surplus years we never received the quotas that other parts of the prairies received. Up to the middle of June we were only able to deliver 2 bushels per acre while others were on an open quota. This is the reason we are entitled to a government elevator in northern Saskatchewan.

[Mr. Sharp.]

Mr. Sharp: I thank the hon. gentleman for reiterating his position. I was dealing with the problem from the point of view of the interests of grain handling generally, which I think must be a viewpoint that is shared by him as well as by other hon. members from western Canada. I may say to him that even the fact that his bill was on the order paper has prompted some requests from other parts of the prairies which feel that they have at least as good a case as he has.

However that may be, in my concluding few minutes I should like to make a few remarks as to why, granted that everybody would like to have a terminal elevator in their home town, I am sure there might be better places from the point of view of increasing sales of Canadian grain than Tisdale or some other places. I am not singling out Tisdale particularly. There are two movements, of course, that have developed enormously. One of them is the movement out of the west coast to our new markets in the Far East, and there is a case for increasing our grain handling facilities on the west coast. Then, of course, there is the big market for feed grain which has developed recently in eastern Canada. There might be something to be said for increased storage facilities there, even though there has been a big increase already.

Finally, may I say a word about the other point made by the hon. member, and that is branch line abandonment rationalization. In the Tisdale area, there are, as the hon. member knows, several branch lines that could be subjects for abandonment and he has reason to be concerned about this possibility. It could be that if some of the low traffic density lines are closed down the country elevators along the lines that are abandoned would be closed. The implications of this, if I may say so to my hon. friend, are that a town such as Tisdale would likely be one of the places where storage capacity would be increased.

In Tisdale there are already four elevators with a total storage capacity of 344,000 bushels, and I am sure my hon. friend is very proud of this. If the logical pattern is followed I think Tisdale will do well. I am not making a prediction about this. I am just suggesting that it would be logical if there were greater concentration in Tisdale.

May I say a word about the trend that is now going on in western Canada with respect to elevators. I think all hon. members from prairie constituencies will agree that the modern trend is toward larger and well equipped country elevators. This permits greater over-all efficiency in handling, and because of this prospective railway line abandonment on the prairies represents both a problem and an opportunity. The problem,