

The committee heard from witnesses with great knowledge and ability in the handling and marketing of Canadian wheat in particular. That committee, under the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), the chairman and government henchmen, denied the repeated requests of members of the opposition to have representatives of the Wheat Board appear. I do not know what they were afraid of. Western newspapers have given the Minister of Agriculture, the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) a great deal of credit for appointing the former chairman of the Wheat Board to the other place. Mr. McNamara is knowledgeable in respect of grain handling. I would not in any way detract from the reputation which he has built. Western farm papers repeatedly referred to him as being a great contributor to our parliamentary system. He has been referred to as a man with a great grasp of the agricultural marketing system and one who could contribute his knowledge to the legislative processes of Parliament.

The committee proposed that Mr. McNamara be requested to appear. A vote was taken, and the chairman of the committee broke the tie. The government members thought it was nonsense. They indicated Mr. McNamara was appointed to the Senate to get rid of him and they did not want to take advantage of his knowledge of the situation. The chairman—and I acknowledge his wisdom and his spirit of co-operation—voted in favour of having Mr. McNamara appear, but lo and behold, when Mr. McNamara was consulted he declined to appear. The very next day he went to Regina and spoke about the danger of our losing barley sales unless the farmers were prepared to sell it to the elevator companies. He also spoke about the great danger facing the Wheat Board today. Yet he failed to appear before the agricultural committee. This is a man whom I have admired over the years. I have appreciated his wisdom and experience. He has done a disservice to Parliament by failing to appear before the committee. I know he could have contributed a great deal to this situation.

● (8:50 p.m.)

A grave situation faces western Canada. Two concepts very vividly stare the farmer in the eye in respect of the marketing of grain. There is the initial concept enunciated by the president of the Alberta Wheat Pool some time ago when he spoke at the annual convention; he said there is the concept of building up the inland terminals to which the primary elevators would deliver their grain by truck or rail. The full train or unit train system would be used to deliver grain from the inland terminals to outport terminals such as Vancouver and the Great Lakes. The unit train system would be established, farmers would deliver to the primary elevators and the railways would deliver from there to the inland terminal. This is the one concept that was outlined.

The other concept was that the primary elevators eventually would disappear completely and the farmer would deliver to the inland terminals. That would automatically increase the cost of transportation for the farmer. By means of the other system, the railways would absorb the cost through a great deal more

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mechanization. These two systems were clearly enunciated. These are the two systems which were incorporated in clauses 34 and 36 of the grain act. Wisely, the committee brought in amendments to those two clauses of the bill which would make it more difficult for the Board of Grain Commissioners to enunciate those ideas.

I believe we are debating a very important principle. Under clause 36, the provision in respect of the licence to an elevator was reconsidered. Under clause 44 the question of type and size of elevator was thoroughly discussed. Clause 34 was also thoroughly discussed. The Committee considered that these clauses would bring about greater rationalization of the grain handling system. The committee wisely recommended that the word "type" was all right when applied to elevators and equipment, but that the word "size" should not apply to elevators in particular but only to handling equipment in the elevators.

I can only hope that attention will be paid to the situation which is prevalent throughout western Canada. It would appear to be evident that the government is attempting to save money by a reduction in the amount of grain in storage. It is common knowledge that the elevators are now operating at less than 60 per cent of capacity. I shall give you, Mr. Speaker, the minister and the House figures to illustrate what I am saying. The Manitoba grain elevators today have 24.1 million bushels of grain in storage. In 1969 at this time of year they had in storage 45.1 million bushels. Their total capacity is 52 million bushels.

This is a deliberate attempt to reduce storage so that on July 31 or August 1 next year the amount to be paid out by the government in cash to western producers can be greatly reduced under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and the money spent in other provinces. I need not mention in which other provinces. Let us look at the situation in Saskatchewan. The present holdings are a little better. There are 155 million bushels in Saskatchewan today. The amount in storage a year ago was 170 million bushels. The total capacity in Saskatchewan is 210 million bushels. In Alberta, basically the same situation holds true in respect of reduced storage as for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In fact, it is the policy of this government to keep the storage at 60 per cent of what it was a year ago. If this policy is continued, there will be in the order of \$200 million less in the pockets of the farmers next July 31 or August 1. This is not deliberate thievery but it is deliberate deception by the government to prohibit farmers delivering their grain.

I see the Minister of Agriculture with a smug look on his face. He is capable of this. The point is that if this is not deliberate policy, why is the quota not increased in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta? It is not increased because they want to have vacancies so that the elevators will operate at 60 per cent of capacity or less. Today in Manitoba the elevators are operating at less than 50 per cent of capacity. The present storage is 24 million bushels and the capacity is 52 million bushels. The point is explicitly spelled out. This government wishes to reduce the cost under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. The government is not worried about the farmers. Members