

Canadian Livestock Feed Board

with me because I have some major questions to ask about clause 6(g) dealing with the authority of the board to require any persons engaged in any segment of the grain business to furnish information on request dealing with the workings of their business, the costs they pay, their selling price and profit, and the charges for the various services they render.

My uneasiness arises because this bill in effect incorporates most or all of the powers that are normally found in provincial marketing schemes. It deals with the power to buy, sell, store and transport grain, and it requires individual segments of the industry on request, "by order served personally or by registered mail" to open all phases of their business transactions for inspection. This is found in provincial schemes as well, and is not strange; but this bill gives power to the board whereby it can designate individuals or companies to act on its behalf as its agent or agents.

In other words, under this provision the board could designate an agent in Ontario who in effect would purchase all the feed grain necessary to meet the lack of supply in eastern Canada, and on the other hand can designate a single agent or agency to sell all that is needed to the trade in eastern Canada. I view these powers with a great deal of uneasiness because we have seen the havoc wrought by such powers given to marketing schemes in Ontario, where they worked to the disadvantage rather than advantage of certain segments of agriculture. But there is a tremendous difference between this and a provincial marketing scheme. In a provincial marketing scheme the particular segment or commodity group involved has the prerogative to request or reject participation in such a scheme.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Here, Mr. Chairman, the significant difference is that if this bill passes, all commodity groups dealing with grain, and all segments of the trade, will have the regulations foisted upon them by the will of parliament without having the opportunity to show by a vote whether or not they feel this is desirable at this time. I am well aware that such agencies as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Farm Union, and other segments of the industry across Canada, are very desirous to see legislation passed which will accomplish the ends pointed out in the principle of this bill. I fear however that the trade, when reading the different regulations

[Mr. Danforth.]

and realizing the extreme power vested in this board, will be very unhappy over the absolute dictatorship which is possible; it perhaps is not premeditated and perhaps is not contemplated, but I say that under the wording in this bill and under the powers vested in the board such actions are possible and feasible.

I should like the minister to give to me and to the house his interpretation of just exactly the way in which he feels this board will administer. Will it be possible for them to designate an agency to sell; can they confine it to an individual company, a group of companies, or a co-operative; are they in a position to designate to this degree? If not, can the minister point out to me a clause or provision which hinders the board taking such action?—because this could drastically disrupt the entire grain trade. This is one part I am very much concerned about. I would hope the minister would deal with this at length.

Mr. Sauv : This is just to enable us to act as a broker if need be, and after having been authorized so to do by order in council. But when we act as broker we act as the normal trade acts. We do not sell directly to anybody. We are just one of the brokers among a number of large brokers, and the grain acquired is distributed through the normal channels of the trade. We do not go further than that. There is no provision, other than the authorization we have to act as a broker. If I understand your fear correctly it is that we might, in place of the people who are in the trade, act directly as salesmen to the individual farmer. This is not provided in this bill.

Mr. Danforth: Mr. Chairman, if I may pursue this further, the minister's interpretation is as he set it out in his initial speech. My point, however, is that although this is the intent of the minister, under the provisions of the bill as it is constituted this board does have the absolute power to designate an agency to act on its behalf and to designate an agency to buy or sell. The minister speaks of a broker on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. I can understand that particular segment of the transaction; but I would hope the minister contemplates that if there should be a scarcity of supplies in the east this board will consider purchasing grain from Ontario or from Quebec as the case may be. Certainly this grain is not offered for sale on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. There may be in the maritimes pockets of excess grain that