

Canada Grain Act

might be considered to be a large factor. We are away behind in this regard. There should be some sort of crash program.

This bill will provide the government with extreme powers. There may be a necessity to provide criteria in respect of the changes to be made. The bill will give absolute power to the minister rather than to the grain commissioners. Perhaps this situation should be considered. I think somewhere along the line, if it is found that changes in respect of the Canada Grain Act would be mutually beneficial we should trust each other in this regard and not place absolute control in the minister. If the advice given was rejected by the minister, the onus would be on him to give an explanation. In addition to the men just running around checking on the elevators, and so on, I think on the basis of their experience they could furnish valuable information to the minister.

I know there are other points which could be raised at this time. I certainly wish to see the bill reach the committee as quickly as possible. If the Agricultural Committee should decide that certain areas should be visited, I believe either the committee or a subcommittee should look into the question in order to see what adjustments can be made as quickly as possible and bring this matter to a head immediately.

On the basis of the evidence that can be obtained, I hope this bill will receive as speedy a passage as possible. But I also hope the government and the minister will heed the advice I have tried to give at this time, especially in respect of the thousands of farmers who will find themselves in an even more difficult position than the one they are in now.

• (9:30 p.m.)

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, we have waited some time for the announcement which the minister has made to the House tonight, and some of the things which he said, such as that this bill is a key instrument in the marketing of our grains, are, of course, quite true. The efficiency of our marketing system depends to a very considerable extent on how well we grade our grain and how well it is prepared for market.

One is somewhat shocked when one sits in committee and asks one of the experts what is the difficulty in getting barley to a particular market and the expert replies it has too much wild oats in it. Of course, any really adept farmer will get the wild oats out of the

[Mr. Korchinski.]

barley, so this is not a problem. In an instance like this the problem is to make sure that the regulations are such that a second-rate type of product is not offered on the market.

The minister said we should be able to change quickly and that we have to meet the needs of advancing technology. One cannot substantially quarrel with this point of view regarding flexibility, and so on. But what we really need to consider is what are the priorities which we are seeking to establish in this act, and what are the aims? The following is stated in the act at page 12:

Subject to this act and any directions to the commission issued from time to time under this act by the Governor in Council or the minister, the commission shall establish and maintain standards of quality for Canadian grain and regulate and supervise grain handling in Canada, to ensure an efficient grain handling system and maximum acceptance of Canadian grain as a commodity of dependable quality in domestic and export markets.

This sets the case for the need for this act as succinctly and as carefully as it could be said. The part about the act about which I would be concerned is its reliance on Order in Council to change the grades, to establish procedures, to control whole mechanisms of the act. Repeatedly in this act reference is made to Order in Council. The minister spoke of protein grading, quite properly so; but this act as drafted does not provide for protein grading. It is left open.

Mr. Olson: It provides the authority.

Mr. Gleave: That is true. If you go back in the act to where the specifications of the grades are set up, you will see that certainly we have done away with one of the top grades. I would judge by this that the milling grades will be the top three grades. This is some change from what we had before, but essentially as the grades are specified within this act and as they are set out it is the sight and weight grading procedure which we use now. By Order in Council this year, next year or the succeeding year these grades can be changed to include any factor that the minister or the cabinet may decide it is advisable to include under the act. This is a pretty substantial change.

The Canada Grain Act has a long and honourable history. At times in the past it has been described as the Magna Carta of the western farmer because it enshrined certain procedures on the basis of which the farmer could claim his rights. Those procedures were established by Parliament and they could