

*Grain*

For years I have been saying that more and better facilities are needed for the storage and transportation of our grain. We must be prepared to deliver what our customers want when they want it. It is quite obvious that the unusually large amounts of tough and damp grain with which we must contend this year have interfered somewhat with the normal movement through our transportation system. I understand also that some Japanese orders for wheat from the United States were cancelled recently, and that the ships were sent on short notice to Vancouver to take Canadian wheat instead. This is a very welcome development and one which we can ill afford to fumble.

Canadian farmers are in the business of selling grain to a great variety of customers through the agency of the Canadian Wheat Board. To be successful in this merchandising operation, it seems to me one of the first essentials is to have an adequate supply readily available for our customers. I believe this demands a thorough overhauling and upgrading of our grain handling system. Methods must be developed very quickly to make sure that the Wheat Board can deliver grain to our seaports in whatever quantities and qualities may be required by the market from time to time.

I suggest we need more terminal space for the storage of large quantities of different grades of wheat. It would likely be necessary that these be at ports in order to avoid the rail line bottlenecks. Inland terminals served by unit or containerized trains, or pipelines, should also be considered. I think the suggestion made this evening by the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Dumont) regarding storage facilities in eastern Canada is also a very good one. Also, the statement of the last speaker that we need considerable storage facilities at overseas positions is worthy of consideration.

I know that some officials of the Wheat Board and the Board of Grain Commissioners recognize that our grain handling facilities are far from adequate to cope with modern grain market conditions. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has done something about this. This farmer owned organization, of which I am a member, has plowed back much of its past earnings and will put much of its future earnings into large new terminals at the west coast. I would urge everyone involved, the railways, the grain companies, the National Harbours Board and all other agencies to get

on with the job of bringing our system up to date.

To get back to the immediate problem I tend to agree with those who have been advocating the appointment of a transport controller or commissioner. Some years ago such a person did a fine job of directing and co-ordinating grain movements. I know there has been a transport committee for most of the season so far. This committee is composed of representatives of various organizations. But the fact that the present problems have developed casts some doubt on the efficacy of this essentially voluntary arrangement.

It is said that the best type of committee to get action is a two man committee, with one member absent. Therefore, I would be in favour of the appointment of a transport controller, at least for the balance of this crop year, with authority to see that what needs to be done in this emergency is done and done promptly. There is a good deal of grain of various grades in western Canada which is needed to supply the market. It may be that traditional shipping areas may have to be disregarded. This may mean the shipping of Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan grain to the west coast, or the shipping of Alberta and B.C. grain east. It may also mean an increase in shipping costs. I believe most farmers would agree it would be better to take a little less for grain in order to cover such increased marketing costs if this is necessary to develop and maintain our sales.

Then there is the matter of the equitable sharing of marketing opportunities between farmers of various parts of the prairies. Eventually all this grain will be handled some time, so it is essential that all kinds of grain be accepted from all areas and stored if necessary. If it is stored in positions where it is readily marketable, buyers will more likely be found. This important consideration of equality of delivery by the end of each crop year must never be forgotten. That is the main purpose and justification for a quota system.

In conclusion I would say that if there is any blame to be assessed in this present situation most of it can be laid to an outmoded transportation and storage system. In any case there is little profit in trying to blame individuals or groups. What we should be doing is deciding how best to improve conditions. I think there is a good deal of merit in having a one man transport controller with meaningful authority.