

*Canadian Wheat Board Act*

in his whole talk he has yet to prove that the Winnipeg grain exchange justifies its existence by any useful purpose.

He referred to the stupidity of the pools, how they grew, and the officials of the pools. The organization of western pools, the co-operative enterprise there, has saved the western farmer millions and millions of dollars. Even those farmers who did not deliver any grain to the pools gained by the fact that the pools are operating. I listened to his eloquent remarks about this great economy which has given so much. It is a great economy under private enterprise where a group of people sitting in the grain exchange can extract their millions out of the toil and labour of the farmers of the western plains, where hundreds of thousands of farmers do their work and slave. Because of the very things that went on in the Winnipeg grain exchange, the mortgage companies and the machine companies, those farmers came out at the end of 1939 with about \$688 million worth of debt around their necks. It ruined those farmers. They had no crop year after year. Those farmers have been staunch and firm in their determination that the Winnipeg grain exchange type of legalized robbery shall be done away with and that a co-operative, a non-profit-making organization, shall handle their grain.

As far as his story about the opposition of eastern and western farmers is concerned, the western farmer will know at least that he is not compelled to sell his coarse grain at a low fixed price and let the grain exchange boost the price up, have the feed companies in the east buy up that grain at a cheap price and use the inflated grain exchange prices on the open market to sell their high-priced feed to eastern farmers. No matter which happens under a proper wheat board, nobody will be making a pile of money out of it—that is, the middle man—and the farmers in the east and the west will be together on this point.

I was particularly interested in the legal aspect mentioned by the hon. member. I should like him to turn up—and I am sure he must have done this—the original act passed by the Tory government in 1935. They are the fathers, if he has any doubt about it, of the original Canadian Wheat Board Act. I should like him to read section 14, and I am going to read that section to the house. After section 13 which set up the board and outlined its duties and its privileges, section 14 states:

14. The governor in council may approve of the provisions of this act being made applicable to oats, barley, rye or flax produced in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta

[Mr. Castleden.]

and British Columbia, if the board recommends that such approval be given, whereupon the provisions of this act shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to such kind of grain as they apply to wheat.

It was not illegal in those days. It was not unconstitutional.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): That was declared unconstitutional.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: When?

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Well, I will give you the citation.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: In 1937. There is no constitutional difficulty about that. Apparently there is a constitution in this country which allows the government to go out and tax people without parliament even sitting, but it will not permit this government to go out and pay back to the farmers money which rightfully belongs to them. The payments which are to be made under this act are to be made, not out of the consolidated funds but out of the money made by the Canadian wheat board through the handling of the farmers' grain. It is their own money that is to be handed back to them.

We in this group want to facilitate the passing of this resolution and this legislation in order to get the cheques out to the farmers as quickly as possible. Members sometimes seem to forget, while they are sitting in this ivory tower, away from many of the realities of what the people are facing in the country, that a great many farmers in western Canada live in drought areas; that they did not get any return from their crops last year and need these payments on the 1945, 1946 and 1947 crops to carry on and put in their new crops, and that they want to know what is to happen with regard to barley, oats and rye. They want to know whether they are to be handled on the open market or whether they are to be handled through the grain exchange.

In anything we say here we shall be in support of putting this legislation through as quickly as possible. We are not delaying this bill. We are trying to facilitate it. I resent the charges made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) the other night when he said we were aiding and abetting the Tories in having this thing delayed by having three or four bills put up instead of one. We moved an amendment to have oats and barley, the coarse grains, put into this act in 1947, just one year ago. There were all kinds of constitutional difficulties at that time. Now the government wants to put them in. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, that there are two parts to this bill or resolution which we have before us. One of them, I think, has the unanimous support