

Business of Supply

approach that is appearing looks good. The Grains Council looks as though it may work and will be a good, long-term solution.

I submit the appointment of a Minister without Portfolio to be responsible for grain was a good thing. We have a good man for this job. The block system for boxcars is also good. The fact that serious people are considering the modernization of the standards of grading grain is good, and I understand this House will be asked to make amendments to the Grains Act to this effect. Developing market research and forecasting activities, which this industry never had before, is a good thing. The member for Regina East spoke of diversification that is causing the Japanese to look for oil seed facilities, etc. All of these are good.

Predictions indicate that the demand for grains will catch up with supply during the next decade. On the other hand, if there is a slack in the long-term industry, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion will help to pick up that slack. This was evidenced in my own hometown last month when Boeing located there. The federal government assisted in this venture to the amount of approximately \$1 million.

In the long term the federal government is facing up to the situation. It appears that ultimately the correct decisions will be made, divorced of politics, by the men who should make them in this free economy of ours. I refer to the people who live at the head of the Lakes and west of there who are mostly concerned with the grain trades.

Everyone I talked to in the Winnipeg area told me there is a healthy feeling of co-operation, co-ordination and long-term optimism. People are putting aside their petty regional, bickering politics—I do not mean this in a “political” sense,—and grappling with the long-term problems. It will not be too long before the people of western Canada start looking after their own knitting in a way they have not done before. When this happens, they will not have to look to politicians other than for genuinely political decisions.

• (9:10 p.m.)

In the short term, I suggest that because this country has been involved in politics up to the armpits in the grain trade in the last 80 or 100 years, politicians cannot pull right out just because the people themselves are beginning to make decisions in a sophisticated,

twentieth century way, as they should be doing.

How does one maintain now the ability to produce at present levels, so that opportunities can be seized when present levels of production are again required in the next five or ten years? How does one see these farm people through the present crisis without wrecking this wonderful producing machine? How does one help individual farmers to get through this cash crisis period without encouraging people, falsely from an individual point of view and, I would say, sinfully from the point of view of the country as a whole, to grow unwanted grain? How does one help them without falling into this trap? These are the matters we should be debating today, not details which, I maintain, have been brought forward with the best of good faith by hon. members but which are wide of the mark.

To fill the Lakehead terminals now, as some have suggested, would accomplish little. Some farmers might receive small amounts of instant cash, but the handlers at the Lakehead would soon run out of work because the elevators would be full; they would be laid off after a couple of months. More important, the pipeline feeding through to the Lakehead elevators would soon have done its job. Then boxcars would be dispersed all over the country even more widely than they are today; it would take God knows how long to get the railroads cranked up to do their jobs properly so that when navigation opened they would be able to feed the Lakehead again.

Is it not more sensible to arrange for a crescendo of build-up, so that when navigation opens things will be running full blast at the only time it really matters? The figure of 1,000 boxcars a day has been mentioned. They would have to be hastily assembled, then dispersed, then reassembled again. I maintain it is better to do what is being done now. Hon. members should not forget that grain is moving at the present time; about 20 million bushels a month are moving to Vancouver, grain is moving steadily to Halifax, and the Lakehead will be going full blast when navigation opens. Grain cannot move out before that, because neither the government nor the opposition parties can persuade the ice to melt earlier on the Great Lakes. I note that 375 million bushels will be moved during this crop year, 260 million bushels in the final six months. There will be lots of work for everybody when the ice goes off, and nothing will