

Private Bills

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Harkness moves that I do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of the whole on the said bill. Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Rinfret in the chair.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. May I remind hon. members that this bill has one clause and a schedule with several parts.

On clause 1—*Increase of capital stock.*

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the sponsor of the bill is in a position to make any comment on his own behalf or on behalf of United Grain Growers concerning the very interesting and worthwhile suggestion put forward by the hon. member for Skeena regarding an expansion of grain terminal facilities in the city of Prince Rupert. Those of us who have been following the remarks of the hon. member for Skeena realize that he has made a number of attempts to place before the house the advantages of the harbour and terminal facilities at Prince Rupert in relation to the possible expansion of our grain trade. In view of the position that has been taken by the government it seems to me that this suggestion is one which is relevant to the possible future activities of United Grain Growers.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the hon. member as well as others will realize that I am in no position to commit United Grain Growers to a project of this kind. I am also sure I am safe in saying that the directors of United Grain Growers will give careful consideration to the remarks which have been made in relation to the establishment of a terminal elevator at Prince Rupert. What their decision may be will, of course, depend on what they consider to be the best interests of their many thousands of farmer shareholders who supply the grain. I am sure they will give careful consideration to the idea.

Mr. Barnett: I am sure the hon. member for Skeena will agree that the directors of the company must consider first their responsibility to their shareholders. I am glad to note that the sponsor of the bill has assured us that the directors of the company will pay attention to the idea proposed by the hon. member for Skeena.

[Mr. Speaker.]

• (6:30 p.m.)

Mr. Leboe: Mr. Chairman, I should like to endorse what has been said about the possibility of encouraging the company to establish facilities in Prince Rupert. Over the last few years Canadian National Railways have spent millions of dollars in improving the railroad which has its terminus at Prince Rupert and on which this grain would move. Because a great deal of the grain goes to the Orient, it seems to me that rather than putting stresses and strains on the facilities at Vancouver and other places this is one place where a great deal of good for Canadians could be accomplished by United Grain Growers stepping in and filling the gap, as the hon. member for Skeena has said, and providing these facilities.

It is interesting to note that the greatest grain producing areas of western Canada are closer to the west coast. There is an exceptionally good railway grade for moving grain from Edmonton west through Jasper and Prince George. There are no high passes to go through and no steep grades to climb. It would therefore seem to me to be a very feasible operation. I should like to commend the hon. member who introduced the bill for making the statement that he would bring this suggestion to the attention of the directors of the company. I am sure the directors will look into all the advantages offered by the port of Prince Rupert, which incidentally is one of the great ports on the west coast.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I have now had the opportunity of listening to the hon. member who sponsored this bill and the remarks of other colleagues in the house. I should like to add my support to this bill because it appears that the farmers have themselves operated this organization for a very long period of time in a very economical manner and the company has brought advantages to its shareholders as well as the membership who ship their grain through United Grain Growers.

The suggestion that has been made merits the attention of United Grain Growers board of directors. I refer to the building of facilities in the hitherto unserved area, so far as United Grain Growers' elevators are concerned, of Prince Rupert. As previous speakers have said, the C.N.R. line appears to be the most direct one from the area of production to point of shipment to the Orient where a large share of our grain is now going.

It also appears from what has been said on previous occasions that the facilities of the