

Canadian Wheat Board Act

Mr. Cliff Downey (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, this bill incorporates housekeeping amendments to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. It changes some terminology and some regulations. Instead of talking about Fort William and Port Arthur, we are now to talk about Thunder Bay. With respect to clause 4, we are told that the amendment would allow the board, in special circumstances, "to authorize the delivery of grain after the end of the crop year, for inclusion in deliveries for the expired crop year." I think there is considerable merit in these proposals, especially when we take into consideration some of our experience in the past with deliveries and transportation, when it was not possible for all quotas to be equalized over the year.

I think the basic concern that most of us will express when speaking on the bill relates to the possible inclusion of rapeseed, rye and flax under the selling authority of the Wheat Board. I think it is fairly well accepted that, by and large, the Wheat Board up to now has done a good selling job. Nevertheless, there have been indications in the last few years that some of their selling methods should be reviewed. I think they are being reviewed at present. When you consider the board's past performance, I think you could say that some of the board's programs have not worked out as well as they might have, largely as a result of government intervention. That is why their performance in the sales field has been less than spectacular in recent years. The majority of producers feel that until there is adequate proof that the board is doing the best possible job selling the grains that come under its authority at present, the three additional grains mentioned should not come within the ambit of the board.

A few years ago, possibly, more producers were in favour of including these other grains under the board. Now, in view of what has happened and in view of the decline of the percentage of world trade held by Canadian grain producers, there is some doubt on this. I think that before flax, rye and rapeseed are put under the authority of the Wheat Board, a plebiscite of producers ought to be taken. I think a fairly simple plebiscite might be held, possibly through the agency of the elevator companies. It could involve permit holders coming under the Wheat Board. We need an indication from producers that they want this to be done. I should hate to see these grains coming under the ambit of the Wheat Board if this positive indication is not given by the producers.

It seems to me that the association of private entrepreneurs involved with rapeseed has been doing a pretty fair job in the marketing of that commodity. May I quote a few words from the *Edmonton Journal* of Thursday, April 1. Mr. Hamilton, former chief commissioner of the Board of Grain Commissioners, said in part:

Rapeseed—our most successful crop—is the one that has had the least government control and interference; that should cause us to ponder. I have watched with growing concern Ottawa's determination to become associated with the rapeseed success story of Western Canada.

[Mr. Gleave.]

He talks about private and public relations in the field of international selling, and says:

The best public relations job I've seen for Canadian grain? When a Farm Union group from Canada visited China several years ago. I was in China about one year after this group and they had certainly paved the way for us. I am sure this is one of the best ways to promote Canadian grain in such markets.

The *Leader Post* of February 25, 1971, carries this report on the successful merchandising techniques of the rapeseed industry:

The rapeseed association has been so successful selling rapeseed and rapeseed products that it staggers the imagination.

In his report to the rapeseed association's annual meeting in Edmonton recently, Mr. McAnsh discussed six areas where association rapeseed staff has been active—Japan, Taiwan, Europe, Mexico and Latin America.

'Within the first year or so of its existence,' he reported, 'the association mounted an eight-man mission to go to Japan—

'The prime interest of the mission was to promote the use of rapeseed meal in animal feed formulations, in order to obtain a share in a very large market in Japan for feeding stuffs.'

A two-man team was sent to Taiwan in June, 1969, for consultation with oilseed processors. Shortly after, Taiwan bought 1.8 million bushels of Canadian rapeseed.

Early in 1970, a rapeseed mission visited Holland, West Germany, Italy, Spain, France and the United Kingdom.

'It soon became apparent that hesitancy on the part of animal feed formulators to include rapeseed in their mixes was a barrier to the sale of rapeseed.'

The article goes on:

The association sent a four-man mission in January to visit Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Chile. On the heels of this mission came a second of three men to visit El Salvador, Costa Rica,—

And other countries in the area. We can see the kind of job that the rapeseed growers are doing in promoting the sale of rapeseed internationally.

The *Globe and Mail* of April 29 reported the views of Mr. A. M. Runciman, chairman of the Canada Grains Council. According to the article:

• (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Runciman said that in its 35 years of existence the Canadian Wheat Board had never experimented with the opening of overseas offices. "So we are simply looking at the possibility of establishing a non-profit, non-government trade agency for the grain industry."

In my opinion, our present diplomatic staffs and missions ought in many cases to be replaced in part, at least, by sales-oriented personnel and organizations.

I should like the House to consider how effective some of these government marketing agencies really are. We were fortunate enough on Tuesday last in the Finance Committee to be given the benefit of the firsthand knowledge of a gentleman who is himself engaged in the export field, a Montreal exporter by name of Mr. George Schäfer. I should like to read from the brief which Mr. Schäfer presented to the committee since it illustrates exactly what we are getting into. This is to be found in issue No. 40 of the proceedings of the committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

This year, after a world wide decrease in production versus demand, there is a shortage of milk powder and the E.E.C. has