

Canada Grain Act

Members of his Party have a lot of nerve to stand in this House and talk in terms of political manipulation of this Bill.

I simply want to say that I can think of no better guarantee to ensure the independence of the members of the commission than to give them a reasonable term of office. I think the suggestion of seven years is a reasonable and adequate one, one which I believe is supported in the main by responsible farm organizations and producers on the Prairies.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address the two motions briefly. First, Motion No. 1, which has been moved by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) on behalf of the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) is opposed to requests on the part of the commission that it be enabled or be given the authority to delegate certain responsibilities. During the course of the committee hearings the relevant authorities made it very clear—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would just like to say that Motion No. 1 was not put because there was no one in the House to put it. We are on Motion No. 2.

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): I misunderstood, Mr. Speaker. I thought that it had been put by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt on his entry into the House.

With respect to Motion No. 2, I would like to echo the comments made by the Chairman of the committee, the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson). I wish to point out that what the industry is seeking in its recommendations is that a length of term be established for grain commissioners, as has already been suggested, to secure some continuity. The Grain Commission is largely responsible for Canada's reputation which the Canadian wheat industry has achieved throughout the world. In times of difficult markets we have always been able to sell. The quality of our grain and reliability has never been in question. That is largely due to the work of the Canadian Grain Commission and those who represent the Government of Canada in that regard.

● (1140)

Many regulatory bodies are staffed by individuals who have a specific term, whether it be five or 10 years. What is suggested here is a compromise position that individual grain commissioners be put in position for a specific term of seven years, and assistant grain commissioners for a slightly lesser term. As has already been suggested to the House, we are anxious that people of quality be appointed. We are also anxious that people be protected in their appointments to the extent that it makes it worth-while for them to relocate to Winnipeg from Saskatchewan or Alberta. For example, with respect to assistant grain commissioners, one of the decisions made in recent months was that a position should be moved from Winnipeg to Brandon. People who accept such positions

need to know that they will be there for a reasonable period of time if they are to accept that type of responsibility.

The suggestion that there should be a specific term is an appropriate one. It is consistent with other types of regulatory appointments that the House has made in the past. It should be stressed and sought by all Members that some assurance be given that those who are appointed to those important positions be well qualified individuals who are prepared to act on behalf of the industry, and indirectly on behalf of the Government of Canada. Since the Government came into office in 1984 it has built into the system a provision that such individuals can be called before a committee of Parliament to be questioned, if anyone should have any reservations whatsoever about the quality, qualifications or integrity of the individuals who are appointed.

In my opinion this amendment will strengthen the Grain Commission. It will encourage people with the appropriate qualifications to accept appointments if they are offered in the future. Quite frankly, it is in the long-term benefit of the industry, and that is why I hope at this stage the House will reject Motion No. 2.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question? The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

Motion No. 2 (Mr. Hovdebo) negatived.

Hon. Frank Oberle (for the Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)) moved that the Bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the Bill be read the third time? At the next sitting of the House?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.