

Canadian Wheat Board Act (No. 2)

barley, and so on. Presently the Canadian Wheat Board Act requires the pooling of proceeds from all sales of wheat, oats, and barley in their respective pool accounts, the deduction of all expenses incurred in marketing each grain, and the same payment per grade to all producers. For example, the sales revenue for No. 1 feed barley which is selected and accepted for malting must be pooled by the board with the revenue from all sales of No. 1 feed barley irrespective of its end use. That is how the bill reads now. That gives a nutshell explanation of the problem which farmers saw and the government recognized in bringing forth this amendment.

Under the amendment, a separate pool for barley that has been selected and accepted for malting purposes will ensure that only those costs incurred in marketing malting barley are charged to that pool. With a separate pool, those producers who deliver selected grains such as malting barley will receive the full benefit of any premiums obtained by the board for it. That is the gist of the amendment dealing with the separate pool. Naturally enough, in recent months at least, western producers have been anxious to see the wheat board begin to keep separate accounts. The government, through the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, committed itself to respond to that concern. Accordingly we have this amendment. Under its terms, and as a result of preparatory accounting work already done by the wheat board, it will be possible to treat deliveries of malting barley in this current 1975-76 crop year as a separate pool account, that is, the amendment, when it receives parliamentary approval, is intended to be retroactive to the beginning of this crop year, August 1, 1975.

The second major amendment in Bill C-88, that dealing with the wheat board advisory committee election, follows upon a very successful experiment conducted last year in which the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board provided prairie producers with a first opportunity to elect for themselves this most important advisory group to the board. This, of course, is the aspect of the legislation which was dealt with in the form of amendments at the report stage.

Under the present terms of the Wheat Board Act, the members of the advisory committee are in fact appointed by the governor in council with no provision for their direct selection by producers.

The minister, the Government of Canada, and many prairie producers have believed for some considerable time that the 11 member advisory committee should be chosen by farmers themselves having a direct vote. It was with this thought in mind that the minister authorized the first election of the members of the advisory committee in 1975. The widespread interest of producers in the process is illustrated by the fact that 67 individuals were nominated to seek election in the 11 electoral districts. The campaigns were vigorous and enthusiastic. The successful candidates in that election were subsequently appointed to the committee by the governor in council as technically required by the act.

The new bill will establish and guarantee the electoral process for the advisory committee in the Canadian Wheat Board Act itself. Under the amendment the board will exercise the direction and supervision of the administra-

[Mr. Goodale.]

tive process in all future elections. The governor in council will be empowered to enact regulations prescribing the procedural and electoral rules for the election, and the rates of remuneration for expenses incurred by the members in the proper discharge of their duties.

The next election of the advisory committee will be in 1978, and every fourth year thereafter, according to the new amendment.

As I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, these amendments have been presented to the House in direct response to the representations of producers and producer organizations which have indicated a genuine desire to see the electoral process for the advisory committee enshrined in the statute itself, and to see in the interests of equity a separate pool for selected grades of grains such as malting barley.

May I close, Mr. Speaker, by taking a moment or two to put these latest amendments to the Wheat Board Act into context, into the context of the exciting and impressive development of the grains industry and relevant Government of Canada grains policy over the past six or seven years under the leadership of the present responsible minister who has carried, since 1969, the fundamental responsibility for the development and co-ordination of all policies and programs of the Government of Canada relating to western grain.

For the record, here is a partial list of some of the things which have been achieved since the early difficult days in 1969 and 1970 when prairie grain producers were facing one of their most depressing periods, certainly the most difficult era in recent decades.

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For example, we have seen the introduction of expanded credit facilities and long term government guarantees to enable the Wheat Board to pursue new markets. Vigorous efforts have been made for the first time, to break into the world barley market where we had never seriously been before 1970. There was the annual commitment of \$10 million toward a new market development fund to enhance grain marketing opportunities. New research facilities have been established through the Canada Department of Agriculture, a new crop science division at the University of Saskatchewan, and a "protein-oil-starch" pilot plant in Saskatoon to help find new way of processing grain and oil seeds.

I would remind hon. members of the establishment of the two-price wheat program, of the substantial increases in the level of available cash advances together with provisions for more flexible repayment arrangements. I would also call attention to improvements in the timing of Wheat Board final payments and adjustment cheques, to the implementation of the deferred cash ticket option on grain deliveries, and to the arrangement for putting reliable production and marketing information into the hands of producers regularly each year well in advance of seeding.

Determined efforts have been made to remove old inequities in our system of domestic feed grains marketing. The House will recall measures to bring about an upgraded crop insurance program, the premiums for which the Government of Canada shares 50-50 with farmers. In addition,