

*Canada Grain Act*

percentages. Therefore the argument that they delivered on the basis of one elevator, one car, could not be advanced very successfully in view of that evidence. However, as I say, this matter will come before the agriculture committee and I hope that we will all avail ourselves of the opportunity to get all the information necessary on that point. I know we can get it, because the witnesses will all be there. Surely it would be advisable and wise to wait until we have all the latest evidence and the recommendations of the various bodies before we embark on any particular scheme.

In view of the fact that the Saskatchewan wheat pool, which is the major marketing agency in the province and which handles a very large percentage of the crop—as a matter of fact, in 1952-53 they handled 46 per cent of all marketings in that province—has a suggestion of its own, we should at least give it the advantage and privilege of presenting its scheme to us in the agriculture committee, and we should study that scheme before passing this bill. As I say, the one is not the same as the other.

It is all very well to ask the farmer to elect where he wishes to deliver his grain. I say to the hon. member who presented this bill that I never could understand why he chose October 1 for the allocation of cars. After all, by October 1 in Manitoba most of the crop has already been sold. This is just a technical detail. Once the farmer has elected to deliver to an elevator his choice disappears, because he has to deliver to that elevator. In other words, he is at the mercy of that one elevator for that crop year.

My hon. friend shakes his head. I know what he has in mind. He says oh, no, he does not have to; he can elect. How can you allocate cars if the farmer can change his mind and give his grain to one elevator one day and another elevator another day? If you do that you will have more confusion than ever. If a farmer is to elect according to his choice, then he has to make the choice. If he does not have to make a choice, how can you allocate box cars? It is either one or the other. You cannot possibly have it both ways. That is the opinion of a great many people.

Let me tell the hon. member that a great many producers would hesitate before tying themselves up to one elevator for a whole crop year. It may be all right in some places where there is a very staunch supporter of the pool. He may not hesitate too much to sign all his acreage to the pool elevator. But there are many points at which there are no pool elevators, for instance, and there are two or three private concerns. I am sure

farmers would hesitate before tying themselves down for the whole crop year to one line elevator or the other.

In spite of the fact that at the moment the farmer may not have a full choice, he still has a choice; and when he gets into a row with elevator A he can cross over to elevator B or elevator C and sell over there. I have done it myself in the last two years, though I am not saying I have gotten into rows with elevator companies. I did it because the line-up was too great. There are a great many factors to be taken into consideration when a farmer has to deliver, and he cannot foresee what may happen five or six months in the future.

As I said, I do not intend to reiterate everything I said last year and the year before. But the fact is that a lot of people are leery of this great rigidity, and I do not think it should be placed in the Canada Grain Act. But that does not mean that the problem cannot be solved to a large degree.

The hon. member made the statement that the railroad companies have the power to deny to a farmer the right to deliver to the elevator of his choice. That statement is outdated, and I challenge the hon. member to give me one case in the last year where the station agent was in position to do that. You can read the statement and think it over. The cars are not sent to the agent for the agent to do what he likes with them. This situation does not exist at the moment. If the hon. member will write to any of his friends who are station agents they will tell him that they have not had that privilege for some time.

Then the hon. member said the matter had been referred to the transport controller, who had done nothing. Again this is an exaggeration of the facts. The transport controller and the board of grain commissioners have no jurisdiction in the matter. I challenge the hon. member to show me any section in the Canada Grain Act which gives them authority to allocate box cars in a given point. To say that the matter was referred to the transport controller who had done nothing is leaving a wrong impression, and I do not think it is fair to the transport controller, who has done an excellent job. There are many producers in the west who are grateful for what he has done. He is still doing a great job as controller. There has never been a case to my knowledge since he was appointed controller where a ship has had to wait for grain because there were no cars to move it. Anyone who will look at the matter objectively must agree that he has done a great job.