

*Canadian Wheat Board Act*

The bill before the house is a comparatively simple one. In general the provisions are first, that "minister" means such member of the Queen's Privy Council as is designated to act as the minister for the purposes of this act. Second, and more important, the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board which otherwise would terminate on August 1 will be continued indefinitely and become a permanent part of the law of this land. I would not have spoken had the minister not permitted himself the luxury of endeavouring to rewrite history in certain particulars. Conversion is always a matter for commendation. Prior to the minister's occupying that position views were expressed by other members of the Liberal government not in keeping with those spoken by him. It is well to recognize that for the first time through the years there is widespread commendation for the Canadian Wheat Board, which in the past was unable to mobilize the approval or support of succeeding Liberal administrations.

One could go back to 1917 when the first board was brought into effect under a Conservative government. In 1921, when Right Hon. Mackenzie King assumed the position of prime minister, the wheat board died a natural death. I do not intend to read from *Hansard* unless I am asked to do so, but in 1935 Right Hon. R. B. Bennett introduced wheat board legislation. It is interesting to read the debates of those early days, beginning on July 1 that year, when the late Hon. J. L. Ralston, while leading the Liberal party in words of condemnation, refused to vote against the legislation and gave approval to the wheat board act.

Today the wheat board is receiving widespread commendation and properly so. It has been the greatest single stabilizing factor in the economy of western Canada and of Canada as a whole. When the Liberal party came into power in 1935 it promptly in effect ditched the board. History cannot be rewritten because the government feels these things should be forgotten. The board was dead as soon as the Liberal party came into power in 1935. It was only a question of allowing it the privilege of dying by inches. These things are not to be forgotten.

I accept the minister's sincere adherence to the wheat board, but as he spoke I felt he should be reminded of other days. His arrival in the present government has brought hope to those who believe in the wheat board.

• (3:50 p.m.)

When we were in office we took measures to benefit the western farmer, but not at the expense of other parts of Canada. For years under Liberalism the west was the forgotten part of Canada. If anyone on the government side, including the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene), would contradict that, I call as my witness the premier of Saskatchewan. Over and over again he has reiterated that during the Conservative administration western Canada was raised economically to a level reasonably equal with that of other parts of Canada.

We remember over and over again asking the Liberal governments of Mr. King and Mr. St. Laurent to provide loans on farm stored grain. They said it could not be done. The farmers had piles of wheat.

**Mr. Rapp:** Nine hundred million bushels.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The attitude of Right Hon. C. D. Howe was that, after all, if other countries wanted wheat, they could come for it.

We provided immediate loans on farm stored wheat, and that turned the piles of wheat into money for the farmer. We brought in acreage payments. Today on every hand, as I found when I was out west a few days ago, the farmers are saying, regardless of political considerations, that those payments which have been stopped since this government came in, benefited the western farmer and Canada as a whole. Our policies when we were in office, changed wheat from a glut to an asset.

I should not have mentioned these things at all had the minister not made certain statements which, though they are entirely correct so far as details are concerned, had the effect of leaving a wrong impression, unintentionally. It was simply rewriting history. I point this out to the minister: You cannot sell the idea to the western farmer that any other government but the Conservative government I had the honour to head, would have sold the same amount of wheat. You cannot sell the farmer an idea simply by naming a dam in the province of Saskatchewan after one who did not bring the wheat sales about.

**Mr. McIntosh:** They did not give a dam.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I am sure the Minister of Agriculture must have had something to do with naming of the dam. He was in western Canada. He knows the west. I say this to him: He ought not to go back and tell them his