

I think that was the main reason, although I must confess, frankly, that I gave it no special personal consideration.

This bill, as the committee appreciates, is a very important measure but it is a very technical one. Its whole purpose is to assure that the public moneys are properly accounted for and that parliament is in a position to exercise its constitutional control over the expenditure of public moneys.

I understand that it was felt by those who spent a great deal of time in drafting the bill, that by reason of its character, the Canadian Wheat Board should not be subject to these general rules. It is quite open to parliament, if it feels that the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board should be subjected to some additional safeguards or some additional scrutinies, to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

That is my understanding of the thinking behind it.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think, Mr. Minister, you have outlined practically what Mr. Clark stated the other day.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Yes.

Mr. WRIGHT: And you have stated that you felt as the board were not handling government money but the money of the wheat producers or the grain producers, that they should have some responsibility with respect to their own moneys; but you also said that under the Act the board reports to the House.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: I understand that under the Act it reports through a minister, yes.

Mr. WRIGHT: It reports to parliament through a minister?

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Yes.

Mr. WRIGHT: Therefore, you, under the Act, assume responsibility for the funds of the producers?

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Well, not necessarily—I think there is a distinction.

Mr. WRIGHT: Well, now, Mr. Minister, you said that the annual statement must be submitted to parliament?

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: That is true.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is turned over to the minister and within fifteen days he tables it in the House. Now, the only authority there is to examine that report is this House of Commons—unless you change your Wheat Board Act.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: That is my point.

Mr. WRIGHT: As long as we have that responsibility then I claim it should be in one of these schedules?

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Well, that is a matter of opinion, is it not? My view is this is a matter which should be raised in the House of Commons. Parliament is the body which has created the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The funds of the Canadian Wheat Board are not public moneys; they are moneys which belong to the wheat producers of Canada.

It is a creature of parliament, it is a board, and it reports to parliament. It is incumbent upon anyone who feels that the provisions of the Canadian Wheat Board Act are inadequate in either reporting or supervision to raise the question in parliament, in an endeavour to obtain an amendment to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. It does not fall within the category of corporations listed in the schedules here whose moneys are public moneys.

Mr. WRIGHT: The Wheat Board does on occasion spend public moneys, it distributes public moneys?

Mr. SINCLAIR: Only when it goes in the hole.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Only when we vote \$65 million.