

*National Harbours Board Act*

First of all, I should say I was given to understand that this was just a declaratory bill. It is declaratory of one of the powers the board already possesses. It gives no new power to the board to expend money for new purposes. The board already has the power under section 10 of the relevant statute, as is spelled out in the explanatory note, to construct, maintain and operate terminal elevators in Tisdale.

Churchill is a national harbour under the jurisdiction of the board and the board has the administration, management and control of the work. All these proposals of the harbour board are subject to the approval or veto of the governor in council, so I did not consider this to be a private member's money bill.

However, I should like to say that this bill is of national importance, not only in regard to the building of a terminal to expedite shipment of grain to Churchill, but because we in the west are faced with another problem, the abandonment of railroads. In this regard the building of a terminal in Tisdale would to a certain extent alleviate the situation.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring to your attention the seriousness of the case. For instance, the railroads are presenting a brief to the board of transport commissioners in regard to this abandonment of which I have spoken, which will affect 13,500 farmers in Saskatchewan. These 13,500 Saskatchewan farmers will be deprived of 1,274 miles of railroad, and as a result many grain elevators will not be used any more. As a matter of fact, approximately 40 million bushels of grain, taken as an average over the last 10 years, have passed over these railroads. When I said that this is a question of national importance, I think it is the responsibility not only of the grain companies to provide additional space for storage, but it is also the responsibility of the government. We all remember the years of surplus grain and how we in the west were affected by quotas. In view of that I do not think we can leave it to the grain companies to provide this additional storage space. The government and we in this parliament must see that the farmers in the west will not be put in an impossible position.

As far as this terminal in Tisdale is concerned, another purpose would be served by its construction. Over the years we in the west have always thought that the route to Churchill for the shipment of grain had not been used to its full capacity. Farmers could save from 6 to 7 cents a bushel on freight, because this is the shortest route to Europe. Even our customer, Great Britain, would be

able to save about three cents, because it is about 1,100 miles shorter to use the Hudson bay route instead of shipping grain through the lakehead. In other words, a total of about ten cents could be saved.

Another point I should like to stress is that during the years of surplus, although we had two terminals, one at Saskatoon and one at Edmonton, they were never used to full capacity; they were used only to half their capacity. The reason for that was that the grain companies found it much more economical to store their grain at the lakehead at their own elevators, thus receiving more handling charges and storing charges from the federal government, which amounted to as much as \$45 million to \$50 million a year. I submit that we should not only ship more grain through the port of Churchill, but that the government should see that if this question of rail abandonment is proceeded with the farmers should be provided with government elevators and terminals, not only at Saskatoon and Edmonton but at Tisdale, and thus the cost of storage will be much less than it is at the present time.

The reason I submit that Tisdale requires a terminal is this. A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day sent out officials to investigate the possibility of constructing a grain terminal between the western provinces and Churchill, particularly in the northern section of the country, and Tisdale was named as one of the places which would be very suitably located. In fact it is only about 600 miles from the port of Churchill. The Prescott terminal and the Port Colborne terminal serve the same purpose, but grain shipments from there to Montreal, Quebec and Halifax have to cover a far greater distance than the 600 miles from Tisdale to Churchill.

I should also like to say that Tisdale is the centre of the grain growing area where most of the best grain is grown. A terminal at Tisdale would serve a good purpose, because many farmers are going into livestock production, and with grain being cleaned at the terminal it could be sold back to the farmers. At the present time all the grain going out to Churchill from the elevators is uncleaned. Livestock is developing into a large industry in Tisdale. Last year, for example, approximately \$2 million worth of livestock was sold at auction, just through the stockyards. But what I am most concerned with is that if we in this country are again confronted with a surplus grain position we must have storage places. We cannot depend entirely on the grain companies to provide us with the storage; the government must take the responsibility. We cannot escape our responsibilities in this regard, because as I said at the outset