

Canada Grain Act

not this seem to open the way for the licensing of almost any premises?

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I am sure that before any premises is licensed—

Mr. Tardif: Did you read the bill?

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I have the grain act before me and I have read it several times during the past six or seven years. I also read the bill. Surely the board of grain commissioners do not license any elevator alongside a railway line. It has to be open for public business. A farmer cannot buy an elevator alongside a railway track and keep it for his own business. It has to be open for public business before it can be licensed. Therefore the reverse is directly true. If an elevator is alongside a railway track it does not automatically receive a licence, and neither does it automatically receive a licence if it is not alongside a railway track.

A curling rink would not qualify under any definition as an elevator. I remember when curling and skating rinks were allowed to store grain but they were not covered by separate licences. It was merely the case of an extension of an elevator company's licence permitting it to store grain in an off-site storage place. When this was done away with I questioned the wheat board on it when its representatives appeared before the agriculture committee the following year, and they pointed out that it was eliminated because there were no turning facilities in such places.

I do not intend to discuss the bill at length but I know provision will have to be made for off-site storage if the railways proceed with the abandonment of 4,000 miles of track in the prairie provinces.

Mr. Reynold Rapp (Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go on record as being opposed to Bill C-70, but I would like answers to a number of questions. For that reason I think the suggestion of the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson), that the bill be referred to the standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, is a good one.

If railway abandonment is proceeded with and these off-track elevators are licensed to accept grain I would like to know at whose expense will the grain then be moved to railway elevators? Will it be at the expense of the farmers or of the railways? If it is at the farmers' expense, then many of the benefits they receive under the Crowsnest pass agreement will disappear. Further, if rail-

way abandonment goes through, I would like to know how many of these elevators will be licensed? Will all the elevators that are at present alongside railway tracks be licensed?

If railway abandonment is proceeded with, then instead of licensing many of these elevators I think the government should give serious consideration to having government terminals built on those lines which will not be abandoned, so that if the farmers have to haul 40 or 50 miles to these terminals there will nevertheless be money saved because these terminals will deliver grain to the ports, Vancouver or Hudson bay, but not at the farmers' expense.

I think the minister should give careful consideration to having this bill referred to the committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines. I do not believe it should be talked out. Representatives of the board of grain commissioners or of the Canadian wheat board could appear before the committee and give evidence as to the likely effect if off-track elevator storage were licensed. I know this is a matter of great concern to the prairies where thousands of miles of track will be abandoned. Farmers who had to haul their grain only five or ten miles will be obliged to haul it 50 or 60 miles to the elevators, and this will be an expensive business. If these elevators which are on the lines to be abandoned would accept the grain, and if the government, or the crown companies, were to be responsible for moving it to the nearest station where it could be loaded into boxcars, it would be a different story altogether. If there is merit in the bill now before us, I think it is up to the government to allow the farmers to benefit from its provisions by referring the measure to the committee as I have suggested.

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Carleton): The mover of this bill, the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) is to be congratulated on adopting this means of calling attention to a problem. I know that as an experienced parliamentarian he is well aware of what a private member's bill can realistically be expected to do in the hour which is set aside for us here. I think the intention of the bill is to call attention clearly to a problem which has to be thought through, namely what would be the effect of branch line rationalization on the elevators which are bound to be affected and upon our storage program.

I have followed this debate with great interest. I especially enjoyed the brilliant con-