

Canada Grain Bill

Mr. Olson: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have been here for 11 or 12 years and never before have I heard the argument raised by the hon. member.

Mr. Baldwin: The minister can always learn.

Mr. MacEachen: It is a yuletide argument.

Mr. Olson: It must have been presented as a result of the Christmas spirit.

Mr. MacEachen: Does the hon. member agree that the bill shall be carried?

Mr. Baldwin: Come, come; my Christmas spirit does not take me quite that far.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have listened to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). I must say that his is an ingenious argument. I think I have followed it. I should like time to consider the references and authorities which the hon. member cited. In regard to the rebuttal argument of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), I can see the distinction that he makes, that the point of order raised by the hon. member is covered by the recommendation of His Excellency. I admit to hon. members that this point may be clear to others more learned and with more experience than me. I would ask hon. members to give the Chair time to consider the point and rule on it later.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Baldwin: That would be all right, Mr. Speaker. I suggest that the Minister of Agriculture might consider discretion the better part of valour. He might be able to approach His Excellency tomorrow in order to get the required consent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the debate be adjourned by unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Baldwin: The debate might continue, and before the question is finally put on third reading Your Honour may have had an opportunity to consult the eminent and wise men with respect to this issue. If it is satisfactory to the government, the debate on third reading could continue. Hopefully, Your Honour will reach an affirmative conclusion in respect of my point of order before the question is finally put.

Mr. MacEachen: I think it would be better if we continued the debate. When the debate is ended we can postpone the question on third reading until this point of order has been resolved. When it is resolved we can put the question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the debate continue and that no final determination be made until the point of order has been dealt with?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, this grains bill, C-175, has been thoroughly examined in committee.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Many useful amendments have been made and I think the bill is better as a result. If the government had accepted the amendment of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) this afternoon, the bill would have been considerably better.

The immediate urgency of this bill is in the necessity to upgrade the act so that protein grading will be a factor in making our sales of wheat more acceptable to all countries. Although it seemed on the initial examination that this would be simple, the recent appearance of the Board of Grain Commissioners before the Standing Committee on Agriculture indicated that although grading of grain by protein analysis is relatively easy, with large quantities it becomes extremely difficult to transfer the payment of this to the individual producer. It appears that on pay-out to the producer, the Wheat Board may only be able to make payment on the delivery point basis. It is obvious from the testimony of the Board of Grain Commissioners that it will probably be a long time before individual producer payments for quality of protein will be perfected.

If under this new act protein grading is to be a major factor in our wheat sales, presumably a new set of variables will be introduced as far as payment to the individual grain producer is concerned. Insofar as the final status of the application of protein grading is concerned, it remains obscure and unsettled. The government, particularly the Department of Agriculture, will be charged with the grave responsibility of administering the act in the interest of the producers and with respect to the saleability of our wheat.

The new bill, in a general way, seems to give the government board the authority to control and direct the day-to-day operation of grain elevators. During the representation made by both the line elevator companies, those privately-owned and the farmer-owned companies, I sensed that this possibility was uppermost in their minds. Some restrictions have been placed on the wide general authority envisaged in the original bill. Many clauses of the amended bill will give the board authority beyond that which should be necessary. It is, of course, true that the wide powers specified in the bill will not be particularly restrictive if the regulations under which the act will be administered are reasonable and efficient. I believe it would be in the interest of the government and the grain trade if there were a certain amount of consultation with the farmer-owned elevator systems and the private systems with regard to the possible effect of the regulations.

In submissions presented by the Manitoba and Saskatchewan pools with regard to the white paper on tax reform, they indicated concern about possible changes in taxation proposals that would be of some significance in the future. There is no doubt that a massive amount of capital will have to be injected into the grain handling facilities of the elevator companies in the not-too-distant future.

To some extent the grain trade has been existing on capital and handling facilities expended many years ago. It is important that under the proposed tax reform laws