

Canada Grain Act

Mr. Jutras: The mere fact that they went to the trouble of circularizing all members in Saskatchewan, and of sending the resolution to members of the government is proof enough that they thought their system was better than the one offered by the hon. member for Assiniboia. I do not think there can be any doubt about that.

Now, the hon. member for Assiniboia suggests in one breath that we should adopt this bill today, and in the same breath urges that we should adopt the suggestion of the pools. I do not see how the two views can be reconciled.

Mr. Argue: Which are you for?

Mr. Jutras: If the act is amended as set out in Bill No. 22, then automatically the suggestion by the pools falls by the wayside. Surely the hon. member is not advocating both. The hon. member has tried to excuse himself by saying that, in effect, the suggestion by the pools is the same as his. Obviously this is not so.

Mind you, let me say that I do not think the suggestion of the pools would solve the problem, either. We know that the objective everybody is seeking—and it is not to be found exclusively in the C.C.F. party, the Liberal party or for that matter any other political party—is to devise a way of re-establishing the order of things as it existed before the shortage of box cars occurred, and that is to allow the farmer to sell to the elevator of his choice. Well, the car order book is one part of the Canada Grain Act which attempts to preserve that right.

Last year we had a suggestion from the pools, mainly, that the car order book be reinstated, and the government reinstated it. At the time I did make my position quite clear. I did say that I doubted very much whether you could make the car order book function in a condition of congestion such as we have at the moment. I expressed grave doubts. I thought the transport controller had shown good judgment the year before when he suspended the operation of the car order book.

We have had the experience of another year with the car order book. I think I detected—although he did not say so in so many words—in the remarks of the hon. member for Assiniboia that he now thinks the car order book is not functioning the way it should. He did not suggest that it be suspended again, but personally I think the time has probably come when it should be suspended, because it cannot be made to work efficiently and equitably in a condition of acute shortage such as we have at the moment.

[Mr. Castleden.]

It will be interesting to hear what the various pools will have to say before the agriculture committee. This whole matter should be left until we have discussed the matter again before that committee. Again I hope that all the pools and all the organizations concerned will make it a point to appear before that committee and present their case and try to find a solution, if one can be found, to the problem. Mind you, the problem today is not what it was last year and the year before. My impression is that the problem has greatly shifted. The problem at the moment is not so much the equitable distribution as between elevators at one point. As I understand it at the moment, the problem is far more the allocation as between companies, and that is a problem which has to be met in another way.

As long as there is an acute shortage of cars, I do not care what scheme anybody tries to devise, there will be a problem and it will be a hard one to solve. Personally I do not think we should clutter up the Canada Grain Act with any elaborate scheme of car distribution. I do not think it should be included in the act as permanent legislation. I admit that the situation is not as acute in Manitoba as it is in Saskatchewan, and my understanding is that it is not as acute in Alberta as it is in Saskatchewan.

A moment ago the hon. member referred to the hundreds of letters he had received from the various pools. I for one have not received any letters except the one master copy that was sent from the Saskatchewan wheat pool organization, and I do not know of any other members from my province who have received any copies. I think that is generally true of members from Alberta. That would tend to indicate that the problem is definitely more acute in Saskatchewan than it is in Manitoba or Alberta. The point is that we do not hear the cry we heard in previous years that the railways were distributing box cars on the basis of one elevator, one car. I notice that the hon. member for Assiniboia, whether deliberately or not, did not refer to it this year, which would again prove my contention that the problem is not exactly the same as it was in previous years.

The evidence in the agriculture committee last year proved that it would be hard to argue that box cars were allocated on the basis of one elevator, one car, because the statistics presented to the committee showed that the various companies, line elevators as against the pools, did not deliver the same amount of grain and consequently could not receive the same number of box cars. The only dispute there could be would be about