

grain through inland terminals for cleaning and shipment, I asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

Since the federal government is going ahead with a pilot project to determine the feasibility of channelling grain through large interior terminal elevators, I wonder if the minister would be prepared to make a statement on motions outlining some of the details of this program, such as the elevator companies involved and so on.

I asked the question because of the many implications of this project for the Prairies generally in terms of the use of inland terminals. I inquired whether the government had established objectives, whether it had estimated the cost of operating the necessary trucks, whether it had decided who should lease the trucks and how the private elevator companies would be involved. How would the grain be cleaned and shipped out? This information should be laid on the table without delay so that interested parties in the prairie region can form an opinion as to the government's objectives and the significance of the program by comparison to the expected end results—results which should also be publicly stated.

• (2220)

I make this suggestion no matter on what side of the debate on the use of inland terminals a group may happen to be. These groups, whether the Palliser Wheat Growers Association, the National Farmers Union, the wheat pools, the Pioneer Elevator Company, or what have you, should have the opportunity to know exactly what is going on in terms of the use of inland terminals and to understand the implications for our transportation system. Ministers speak of moving so much grain to the west coast, but at the same time I suggest we cannot ignore the problems that we faced during last winter. We must look at different methods of grain movement and grain handling in terms of one principle above all others, and that is service to the farmers involved. There is no use completely changing the system if this merely adds up to

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

additional cost of production for farmers whose prices for grain commodities are already far too low.

All kinds of ideas are being put forward in this country, indeed in the world, regarding grain movement. The United States has been developing the use of water transportation facilities, different types of barges to haul goods, especially farm products. Some of the railroad companies, such as Pullman in the United States, have developed certain ideas that are based on the use of container cars and larger door openings in grain cars to facilitate quicker loading of grain. There are all kinds of methods that the government can examine. But the most significant and important aspect of this kind of project is that there be complete consultation with those directly involved who will be directly affected after the program has been implemented.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the hon. member's request for details on a pilot project to channel grains through interior terminal elevators, I might say simply that this project is for feed barley only. This barley will be trucked from various private country elevators under instruction from the Canadian Wheat Board to the Canadian government elevators at Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. At this point it will be cleaned, segregated by grade and made ready for reshipment pending instructions from the Wheat Board. At the end of this crop year the pilot project will end and an evaluation will be made. I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that the project will be useful not only for purposes of evaluation but it is expected that four million bushels of barley will be put through the system under the project.

The hon. member also raised other points. However, I can only say that this experiment was undertaken on the recommendation of those who were greatly involved in grain transportation in this country.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.