

Canadian Wheat Board Act

Committee on Agriculture and that the motion be read accordingly.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I support that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have already given our agreement for the bill to be considered in Committee of the Whole. That does not mean we are for second reading of the bill; we are not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that the motion be modified so that the bill be referred to Committee of the Whole instead of the Standing Committee on Agriculture?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement to the motion?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Laniel in the Chair.

On Clause 1.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Chairman, clause 1 could probably be dealt with in more detail, but to expedite matters, may I put a question to the minister. I am a little concerned about the precise details of the relationship between the Canadian Wheat Board and the various voluntary pools. Could the minister explain that hypothetical relationship so we could have a picture of what he envisages in setting up these pools?

Mr. Lang: The only relationship between a pool and the Wheat Board is the relationship between the pool and the Wheat Board Act. The permit book may be endorsed with the notation that the producer is a member of a pool and therefore may deliver his grain only to that pool. That is because he will have contracted with the pool along those lines. There is no other necessary connection between the pool administrators as such and the Wheat Board. It would be the government that would have to take responsibility for approving the financial stability and the adequacy of the plan which the particular proponent of the pool is putting forward, and also to ensure and guarantee the initial price. The Wheat Board need have no connection with any of that proceeding.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): That means that if, for instance, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool offers to its members a plan and gets approval from the minister, he will guarantee 90 per cent of the initial payment, and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is responsible for the selling of that grain on any market without any influence by the Wheat Board.

Mr. Lang: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

● (2200)

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): One final question, Mr. Chairman. Suppose five voluntary pools were set

[Mr. Lang.]

up in western Canada. Does the minister visualize that they would be competing for markets as opposed to a single pool with no compulsion to compete?

Mr. Lang: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that would be very much the case. I think they would be competing very vigorously because the final payment at the end of the year would be quite a revelation in terms of their over-all performance during the year. Obviously the department would have to distinguish between good luck and good judgment in the selling process but there would be vigorous competition between the pools if there were several.

Mr. Nystrom: I understand there is a debate going on about whether the Wheat Board itself could participate in or establish a voluntary pool. If my information is correct, some advisers of the Wheat Board believe they cannot. I should like to know whether the minister thinks they can.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Chairman, I believe the question whether they can would depend upon the interpretation of the Canadian Wheat Board Act. I have not asked that question of my legal advisers because I had not thought it very likely that the Wheat Board would be apt to do so in any case. I see some difficulties in their doing so in terms of financial backing and the relationship between such a pool and their other operations. I do not know of any intention on their part to enter into such activity, so I have considered that question rather theoretically, as one not needing an answer. Therefore I have not asked for an answer.

Mr. Nystrom: I wonder if the minister would look into that, because things may change a few years ahead. Does the minister at this time envisage any other grain producers setting up voluntary pools? I understand the act allows for producers of oilseed commodities other than rapeseed to establish pools as well.

Mr. Lang: Not at this time, Mr. Chairman. I know of no significantly expressed interest at this point. I think if the pooling development worked well in relation to rapeseed demands, other grains could follow. Where there is a sufficient volume of grain I would see no difficulty responding to that demand.

Mr. Nystrom: Could the minister tell us at this time who he expects to participate in the pools? I think the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre said the wheat pools at this stage are not interested in doing so, and I have heard some others say the same thing about the private companies as well. I wonder if the minister has received any indication in his office of what groups or associations might be considering pools.

Mr. Lang: I have had some conversations which lead me to believe there will be an interest in a pool. These were discussions of a preliminary nature so we will have to see how they are followed up once the legislation is in place. I hope the pools will look at the possibility themselves because a good number of pool members would appreciate the opportunity of pooling in relation to rapeseed and the pools might not want to lose