

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 22, 1976

The House met at 11 a.m.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT (NO. 2)

#### MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-88, to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (No. 2), as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

**Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw)** moved:

That Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (No. 2), be amended in Clause 1 by

(a) striking out lines 10 to 12 at page 1 and substituting the following therefor:

"bers who shall be actual producers having the qualifications prescribed by any regulations made pursuant to section 10.5".

(b) striking out the words "members of the Advisory Committee and of" in lines 20 and 21 at page 3.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my remarks on the amendment will be brief, but in spite of that fact I think they are very important.

Bill C-88 provides in section 10.5 (3): as follows

The Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the conduct of an election of members of the Advisory Committee and in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations

(c) prescribing the qualifications of members of the Advisory Committee and of actual producers for the purposes of section 10;

The purpose of my amendment is to spell out in the Act that members of the Advisory Committee shall be actual producers. It is important that this be spelled out in the Act in order that producers in the Wheat Board area will know what the ground rules are. If it is not spelled out in the Act but is left to the Governor in Council to make regulations, these regulations can be changed from time to time without the knowledge of the producers, so they could suddenly find themselves faced with a change in qualifications. On the other hand, if it is enshrined in legislation, it would be necessary before any change is made that a bill be brought into this House and passed through the usual stages of first and second readings, the report stage and third reading. When a bill is presented to the House a debate takes place and members of the public, in this case the producers in particular, would know what was happening and would have plenty of opportunity to make representations to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board as well as to their individual MP's who in turn could make their wishes known.

The Canadian Wheat Board is charged with the sale of grain primarily for export purposes. Its function is of prime importance to the producer. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to ensure that the producer has input into the decisions of the Board. I am sure officials of the grain trade have plenty of opportunity to have input from time to time. Therefore, in my opinion, it is very important that members of this Advisory Committee be actual producers.

We held some agriculture committee hearings in connection with this bill, and on May 12 last Mr. Vogel, chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, appeared before the committee. In giving evidence he said this, and I quote from page 87.6 of issue No. 87 of the evidence before the committee:

One of the hardest jobs for the Board is two-way communication, communicating back to the 160,000-odd farmers whom we represent, and in turn receiving their views back. There has as yet been no perfect way discovered to do this, and it is a very hard thing. I think we have made progress generally as a board in our information work that we are doing and I think the election of an advisory committee was a step in that direction.

Later on at the same meeting, and I quote from page 87.10, the minister in charge of the Wheat Board had this to say:

It is a question really of having people that are farmers and, I think, clear sight of the Wheat Board being in touch directly with some farmers about problems that concern them. We all know how easy it is to forget the obvious if you are not dealing with the problem daily as the farmer is.

Later on he said:

I am sure the Wheat Board consults with many others as well as the Advisory Committee.

I think the key words are in the first sentence I quoted, namely, "having people that are farmers". The intent of my motion is that the members of the advisory committee be actual producers or, in other words, farmers. Since presenting this amendment I have spoken to members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association as well as individual farmers who have no connection with any particular agricultural organization. Without exception these farmers told me that they support the tenor of my motion, namely that members of the advisory committee shall be actual producers. As a matter of fact, the minister in commenting upon my motion before the committee on Tuesday May 18 as recorded at page 89:31 of the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Agriculture said:

● (1110)

Mr. Chairman, I had indicated at the last meeting that I could not argue in substance with Mr. Neil's basic proposition, that I would only make a general argument about leaving it flexible for possible inclusions of people that desire to be included by the producers themselves. I would not stick on that because if there were any great movement requiring that there be a change in that, I am sure we could quickly put