

Canada Grain Act

government to implement a box car distribution system that would ensure to the farmer the right to deliver grain to the elevator of his own choice. It was carried unanimously; all were for it.

I ask Liberal members of parliament from Saskatchewan and from other provinces in western Canada to stand in their places and support the restoration of this fundamental right to western farmers.

Mr. Castleden: And call a vote on it, too.

Mr. Argue: We shall take care of calling the vote in due course.

The three western wheat pools are asking for such an amendment to the Canada Grain Act. The demand is also approved by the farm unions. And I suggest to Liberal members from western Canada that they should look at the state of the Liberal party and ask themselves why their party in three of the western provinces is, for all practical purposes, almost non-existent. It is because it has ceased to be the voice of the common people of those provinces. And if the Liberal party in Manitoba as well is not to continue on the skids, downhill, then Liberal members from that province who sit in the House of Commons should on this occasion, and on future occasions, vote in the interests of their farmer constituents who have sent them to the House of Commons to work on their behalf.

I suggest to members on all sides of the house that, as good Canadians, believing in the democratic right of free choice, they should support this measure that will restore to western farmers a fundamental Canadian right, namely the right to deliver grain to the elevators of their choice.

Mr. Rene N. Jutras (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words about Bill No. 22. As the hon. member sponsoring the bill has said, this very same bill was presented to the house last year and the year before. Each year I have had quite a bit to say, and I do not propose this year to repeat what I said previously.

However, in view of statements made by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue), not to mention the gratuitous political advice he so profusely handed out to all members in the house, I should like to refer to some of his remarks. One thing that struck me above everything else is that he tried to leave the impression—indeed he so stated specifically and repeatedly—that the government had purposely gone out of its way to deny a long-acquired right of farmers to deliver to the elevator of their choice. Of course nothing could be more ridiculous than such a statement.

Mr. Castleden: Prove it.

Mr. Jutras: I shall. Just hold on. I have 40 minutes to prove it. Everybody knows that no one has denied anyone any right on that score at all. It just so happens that, because of a shortage of box cars, a situation has developed.

The hon. member said the government had ignored the plea and the demand of farm organizations out west. Again, to say the least, this is a very broad exaggeration of the true situation; because I am sure that even the farm organizations, particularly the three wheat pools primarily concerned with this matter, would be the first to deny that statement. On every occasion—and it was repeated recently—the government and the Canadian wheat board have given the matter careful consideration and have tried to meet the wishes of all concerned, including the private line companies, in order to find a solution to this problem.

One of the main difficulties of my hon. friend from Assiniboia is that he associates with this bill the right of a person to deliver to the elevator of his choice. I suggest there is a vast difference between the bill as he has presented it and the right to deliver to the elevators of our choice; because there are grave doubts in the minds of many producers in western Canada that this bill will do what the hon. member says it will do.

Last year, when we sat in the committee on agriculture, this whole matter was gone into at some length. Representatives of the pools were there to testify and the secretary of the line elevators' association, which represents all the line elevators in western Canada, was also present to give his testimony.

In this way we got the story from all angles, including evidence from the board of grain commissioners and the Canadian wheat board. As a matter of fact representatives of the various pools were asked what they thought of the bill sponsored by the hon. member for Assiniboia, and each of them replied that he had very grave doubts that the bill could be made workable.

After listening to all the evidence and doing my share of study of this problem, it is my opinion that the bill is not workable and, as I said, I believe the pools agree. As a matter of fact, as the hon. member has said, the pools have offered another method by which they thought this situation might be resolved.

Mr. Castleden: Almost identical.

Mr. Jutras: If it had been the same the pools would not have gone to the trouble of preparing it.

Mr. Castleden: It is the same; I have it.