

An hon. MEMBER: Who is talking about what?

Mr. JUTRAS: I resent the fact that every time we rise to say something we are accused of talking out a bill. I do not think any hon. member should be permitted to impute a motive like that, especially at the beginning of a discussion.

I was referring to the Canadian wheat board and I repeat that that board has done a magnificent job. There is no one more grateful to the Canadian wheat board than the farmers of western Canada. My reason for rising tonight is to defend the farmers of western Canada and to see that there is no tinkering with the Canadian wheat board so as to impair its efficiency. I ask hon. members to bear with me for a while and be quiet. I know I have had to stay silent when hon. members across the chamber were speaking. I have had to put up with that kind of thing and I ask that they give me the same courtesy that I give to them.

I was referring to the field inspectors of the Canadian wheat board. I am very glad to give them credit for the work they have done and for the sense of duty they have shown. Theirs has been a big achievement and is in part responsible for the confidence which the Canadian wheat board enjoys to-day among the producers of western Canada. These officials are out on the road every day inspecting the various elevators and talking to the farmers coming to the elevators, and it is only fair that we should recognize the good work they have done. I repeat again that it is no small achievement, and we must give them credit if they have been able to win the confidence of the producer.

Coming now to the bill itself, I have read all the speeches that have been made on this subject at the last session. Very little was said about the Canadian wheat board; in fact there were only two or three references to it. There was a long dissertation condemning the Winnipeg grain exchange, but the other speakers who followed the sponsor of the bill confined themselves to extolling the great humanitarian and social benefits flowing from the grain exchange. We should be concerned primarily with the wheat board itself. I propose first to examine the amendment and then to analyse briefly the financial report of the Canadian wheat board.

The first contention of the sponsor of the bill is that it will, to use his own words, free the officials of the wheat board from some of the restrictions which have been imposed upon

them. The new proposed paragraph (i), which was read a moment ago provides that the board is:

to employ such methods . . . as will not involve the payment, directly or indirectly, of any commission or other remuneration to commissioned merchants, brokers or other marketing agencies.

In other words, this would compel the Canadian wheat board to do its own marketing without having the privilege of asking the odd elevator man or brokerage company to transact some business for it. The explanatory note is quite clear on that, and the intent of the sponsor is also made clear in the explanatory note, which states:

This bill is designed to eliminate the prevalent practice of the Canadian wheat board of paying commissions to agents in connection with the sale of wheat and to free the board to conduct its sale operations without engaging and paying for such unnecessary service.

Those are strong words. To say that the Canadian wheat board is paying for unnecessary service is certainly, to my mind, a reflection on the officials of the board. Whether it would free or restrict the board is, to say the least, a debatable point. In the original act of 1935, we find this provision:

The board is to offer continuously wheat for sale in the markets of the world through the established channels: provided that the board may, if in its opinion any existing agencies are not operating satisfactorily, take such steps as it deems expedient to establish, utilize and employ its own or other marketing agencies or channels.

Consequently, if the board feel they are paying for unnecessary services they have the right to establish their own agencies to take care of that situation. By what stretch of the imagination can it be thought that it would give the board more freedom to cut out this provision which gives the board the authority to establish their own channels? The intention of the amendment is to cut out this provision, and then it is claimed that the board would have more freedom.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Has not the board to pay these commissions whether it likes to or not?

Mr. JUTRAS: It does not have to, because the board may employ its own or other marketing agencies or channels if, in its opinion, any existing agencies are not operating satisfactorily. That provision is quite clear in the act, and that provision the amendment would cut out.

It comes down to this: Either my hon. friends believe that the officials are not using that provision of the act, or they have a different interpretation of that section. I