

Canadian Wheat Board Act

I believe the question we must keep in mind is this. Why should we permit a few publishers or distributors of this kind of literature to go on day in and day out, undoing and undermining the very thing the churches, educational institutions and cultural organizations of this country are trying to build? Why is it necessary for us to permit these papers to be sold just for the sake of the profit there is in this business? Surely we can, by legislation, lend our support to those who are fighting this battle. We can do that by accepting this bill.

On motion of Mr. Tustin the debate was adjourned.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT**AMENDMENT RESPECTING PAYMENTS TO PRODUCERS IN CHURCHILL AREA**

Mr. P. E. Wright (Melfort) moved the second reading of Bill No. 13, to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, 1935.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in introducing this bill there are two things I want to say at the outset. First, I hope that it does not give rise to a debate on the merits or demerits of the port of Churchill so far as the physical capacities of that port are concerned. That is not my purpose in introducing the bill. There are many difficulties in marketing grain through the port of Churchill other than any physical handicaps that may exist at that port. I have introduced this bill for the purpose of removing what I, at least, believe to be an injustice existing in the financial arrangements for marketing wheat through that port.

When the port of Churchill was first talked about many years ago, the grain growers of western Canada were asking through their organizations for a railroad and a port at that point. The dominion government allotted certain lands in western Canada for the purpose of building that railroad. I believe some 14 million acres of land was sold for approximately \$42 million. According to the minister of transport who spoke in this house on March 31, 1945 the Hudson Bay railway itself cost \$32,500,000; the terminal works at Churchill \$13 million; the terminal works at Nelson, which were afterwards abandoned, \$6 million: a total of fifty-one and one-half million. This money was western money set aside out of the sale of western land for the development of the port of Churchill. Naturally, the farmers in western Canada thought they would derive certain benefits from that port when it came into operation.

The producers of wheat in western Canada have received very little benefit from the port. Any benefit there may have been from shipping wheat through Churchill has

largely gone to the consumer rather than to the producer. I have before me a summary of the cost of shipping grain through the port of Churchill as compared with the various other routes. This table was compiled by the Hudson Bay Route Association, and I believe it is correct. For the great lakes route: first via lake and rail, it costs 58.037 cents per bushel; via all water to transfer points, 56.671 cents per bushel; via lake and rail to Halifax and Saint John, 59.605 cents per bushel. To ship wheat through Vancouver to England it costs 59.65 cents; through Churchill the cost is only 45.95 cents per bushel, leaving a favourable balance so far as Churchill is concerned of anywhere from ten to fourteen cents a bushel.

Up to date the wheat growers of western Canada have received no benefit from that lower rate. I will admit that this bill will not give that to us, but it will go part of the way. It is only a step. Whether or not the bill is accepted by the government depends perhaps on the government's intention with regard to the port of Churchill. I put on the order paper a question which was answered on September 29. The purpose of the question was to try to find out what the government's intention might be with regard to the port of Churchill and the marketing of wheat through that port under the world wheat agreement. Until now, we have shipped wheat through the port of Churchill under the British wheat agreement and sold it at the same price as we received at Fort William or Port Arthur. I asked the following question:

Has the wheat board established a price for wheat at Churchill under the world wheat agreement?

The answer was:

No, but question was raised and matter is receiving attention.

I do not know whether it has received that attention and the government has arrived at any decision. Perhaps the minister will give us some information on that when he speaks on this bill. Until some consideration is given with respect to the price at Churchill as compared with Port Arthur and Fort William, the people in western Canada who allocated some 14 million acres of land and spent approximately \$42 million for the building of that railway will not derive any benefit from it.

This bill has been introduced for the purpose of eliminating what I believe to be an injustice. In 1940 when the Wheat Board Act was amended the word "Vancouver" was added wherever the words "Port Arthur and Fort William" appeared. Before that amendment, the people living in the western part of Saskatchewan and the province of Alberta were paid for their wheat on the basis of