

Canadian Wheat Board Act

I have one final question in connection with the bill and I believe it is in order to put it to the minister. It has to do with the schedule appended to the bill. I note that the explanatory note states that the schedule, containing a list of seed cleaning mills, feed mills and warehouses is a list of such facilities in existence as of March 1. Was this schedule reprinted since the debate on second reading? I gather from reading the reports of the debate on second reading of the bill that the schedule setting out a list of flour mills, seed cleaning mills and so on was considerably out of date.

Since the date of March 1, 1967 has been left in the bill, I must presume, unless the minister tells me otherwise, that the list has been reprinted. I do not know whether the bill was reprinted, but I assume it has been. I did not take advantage of the opportunity to speak on second reading of this Bill No. C-106, and that is the reason I am making these remarks now.

There is one other matter I should like to raise with the minister. I do not apologize for doing so, even though he may suspect I am infringing on the rules somewhat. I am referring to the responsibility of the board, perhaps more particularly of this government, concerning the need for supporting some research, some testing and some improvement of our transportation facilities as they relate to the handling and transport of grain to domestic markets outside the prairies and to export positions. All of the evidence which the committee was able to gather during its deliberations and its trip to Vancouver and the prairies last winter seemed to indicate that some of our grain moving methods and some of our facilities were getting out of date. Specific suggestions were made with regard to the feasibility of appointing a transport expeditor who would function under the supervision of the Canadian Wheat Board. I believe this suggestion was forwarded by the committee to this government. I hope the minister and his colleagues will see fit to give the suggestion careful analysis. In addition, it was pointed out rather clearly to this government that it really must assume responsibility for improving port facilities on the west coast. All the data and the indices projected would seem to indicate that the trend will be toward increased exports of Canadian grain to Asian markets. All these port areas, therefore, will really have to be enlarged and improved upon. I refer to the unloading facilities at the port and the slipways for docking boats. All of this can be held in abeyance. One year

[Mr. Schreyer.]

could pass, or two, three, four, five or six years, and before we knew it we could be involved in a grain movement crisis, a grain blockade or bottleneck.

● (4:30 p.m.)

The hope was expressed that since the recommendations have been made the government will now set to work forthwith. I hope the minister, together with his colleague the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) and others, will take some real, tangible action to see that the program to improve these facilities is commenced and that a certain amount of research and investigation into new methods of grain handling is conducted. The concept of the unit train, which I understand is something the United States railways are experimenting with in the movement of grain in the United States, was brought to our attention when we were in western Canada just a few months ago.

I conclude on this note, Mr. Speaker, that the changes that are being provided for through this legislation are of a nature that cannot really be objected to. Indeed the idea of making the board a permanent body with authority to act is nothing more than realistic. The board is entering more and more into long term, long range commitments and agreements, and I think that many purchasing groups and countries would find it better to deal with a body that has the kind of permanent authority which is commensurate with the agreement or contractual obligation that is being entered into at the time. If a master agreement with a term of five years is being entered into, it does not make sense to give the board entering into that agreement a legal life span of less than that term. Therefore, setting up the board with an extension of authority timewise is realistic.

However, Mr. Speaker, in the meantime there are many other substantive matters coming under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board that the government must give cognizance to and deal with in a tangible way in the course of the next year or two.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, one of the most important functions of the Canadian Wheat Board is to provide a fair allocation of the available market to all the wheat producers in the area covered by the wheat board. I just want to speak very briefly on this quota system. I should like Your Honour to know that no member of this party participated in the second reading debate, but I do intend to be very brief at this stage.