

exclusively with his area of responsibility, which is transportation and grain handling. As I read the report, again published in the *Brandon Sun* of April 23, under the byline of Mr. Garth Stouffer, there is not one reference to the stabilization bill which is now before the House of Commons, and which was introduced for second reading by the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board following his return from the hustings.

I wonder why the government does not recognize that, at long last, if it is to get its agricultural house in order it must make clear lines of delineation and demarcation concerning areas of responsibility. If it sends the Minister of Agriculture out to the hustings to discuss the western grain stabilization bill it must give that same hon. gentleman the responsibility of piloting that legislation in the House of Commons, and also of administering it under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture.

As an indication of how the jurisdictional lines and the area of responsibility are being obscured in the government's approach to these matters, we might look at the responsibilities of the minister who administers the Canadian Wheat Board under the Canadian Wheat Board Act. He has, exclusively, a marketing role and has nothing to do with helping grain farmers maintain their income. The Canadian Wheat Board Act, Part I section 4, states as follows:

● (1510)

The Board is incorporated with the object of marketing in an orderly manner, in interprovincial and export trade, grain grown in Canada, and possesses the following powers:

- (a) to buy, take delivery of, store, transfer, sell, ship or otherwise dispose of grain;
- (b) to enter into contracts or agreements for the purchase, sale, handling—
- (c) to enter into ordinary commercial banking arrangements—
- (d) to acquire, hold and dispose of real and personal property—
- (e) to employ such technical, professional or other officers, clerks or employees as may be necessary—
- (f) to establish branches—

There is nothing there about the area of responsibility that the minister responsible for the Wheat Board has assumed in conducting this bill through the House of Commons. If we are really going to come to grips with the long delayed programs for agriculture, Madam Speaker, the government must decide once and for all where the responsibility lies.

In his historic review the minister spoke as if everything wonderful had happened since 1968, but I should like to remind him that some of the programs he referred to came before 1968 under an administration that was closely geared and sensitive to the needs of the agricultural industry. I mention cash advances, ARDA, crop insurance, improvements to PFAA legislation, the pioneer bill in price stabilization for agriculture, the Farm Credit Corporation, and many other pieces of legislation which are now in need of up-grading but were not introduced by the present government.

I was pleased to learn that a former federal civil servant who has spent some years in Manitoba will return to Ottawa to look after the Farm Credit Corporation. I refer to Mr. Baldur Kristjanson who has had considerable

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experience in agricultural problems and understands them. I am sure he will be able to make a positive contribution toward resolving some of the all too obvious problems of the agricultural industry.

Perhaps I can relate some of the problems of the present bill to those of the bill that was first introduced in 1971. The matter of compulsory membership was one of the points in the earlier bill that was criticized. That bill made it compulsory for farmers to join the program, and the present bill seems to be disguised to give the appearance that the plan is voluntary. In effect, however, it is compulsory to an extent for some producers. It also discriminates against one particular group of producers by making it compulsory for them to join.

Under clause 5 (1) of the bill a person who is an eligible active producer, that is, a producer actually working on the land, as opposed to a producer recorded in a permit book who is a landlord or who holds a mortgage on land, of a producer, will, at the time the act comes into force, have three years to decide to cease participating under the act. Thus, between 1975 and 1978 a producer may elect to withdraw from the plan.

On December 4, 1974, the minister responsible for the Wheat Board issued a press release in regard to the stabilization plan. On page seven of that press release the title reads: "Participation Voluntary" and the release states that no farmer will be forced to participate in the plan.

I believe the minister is incorrect when he says that participation is voluntary. The dictionary definition of voluntary is that it is something brought about by one's own free will or choice. It is obvious that a producer does not have the luxury of free will or choice if a time limit of three years is imposed. Voluntary withdrawal from the plan should mean that at any time a producer can decide to abandon it. The minister's view of voluntary withdrawal as indicated in his press release is couched in terms of a restricting time period.

We had some acquaintance with the minister's press releases when he was piloting the earlier bill through the House. In reply to the accusation that we are delaying this legislation and all the wonderful farm legislation that the minister has in store for farmers in Canada, I would point to the minister's interjection in the speech made by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) in debate yesterday, as recorded at page 5383 of *Hansard*.

The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar referred to the press release issued by the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, which had said that the legislation would be introduced within seven days. The minister interjected as follows:

Would the hon. member permit a question? I should like to ask whether he is aware that the reason for the delay in the introduction of the bill was the extensive consultations which were going on with the various farm organizations and our desire to incorporate positive suggestions into the bill. I hope the hon. member agrees that this was a desirable thing to do.

I hope the minister responsible for the Wheat Board will communicate that information to the Minister of Agriculture who just a week ago on the hustings was trying to blame the delay on members of the opposition. But here we have the minister responsible saying that the delay