

## Supply—Trade and Commerce

that the minister must have had something in view. As to finding somebody with the experience of the men who are on the board at the present time, that is practically impossible. You must train younger men. These men are getting older and unless there are younger men in training on the board to fill these positions the time will come when some of the present members will die or retire and you will then be in the position where you will have to make appointments. I think the time to make appointments is now so that there will be somebody in training.

**Mr. Howe:** When the wheat board act was amended on the last occasion my hon. friend will remember that we added coarse grains to the work of the board, and it was felt that might require additional personnel. I dare say the board would get on better if it had four members instead of three, but as I say I have not found a man so far whom I wanted to appoint to the board, and the board has not recommended any appointment to me. One day we will probably need a fourth commissioner. Then we will have to find him and we will find the best man we can. I am very happy about the work of the board at the moment, and when I have a good thing I like to leave it alone.

**Mr. Fair:** Earlier we had some discussion about the international wheat agreement. We got some information but I should like to have a few more details.

**Mr. Howe:** It is not possible to get it from me. The meetings of the conference were supposed to be in camera. I have given all the facts I know, and I hope no one else is prepared to give any more information than I have. The meeting is only adjourned. Mr. Phelps gave some information in Regina and I believe he has been cracked over the knuckles for it. I do not want to be cracked over the knuckles so I am not going to give any information.

**Mr. Argue:** The minister said that negotiations would be resumed later this year. Has he any information as to the probable date of resuming negotiations?

**Mr. Howe:** I have none.

**Mr. Ferrie:** If the minister appointed two more commissioners as requested who would pay their salaries and expenses?

**Mr. Howe:** The producers of wheat.

**Mr. Argue:** We in this group have always supported the wheat board as the agency to handle grain produced in western Canada. As the board is now operated it handles wheat, oats and barley. We have continuously asked that its operations be extended to

include flax and rye. I believe if the operations of the board were so extended it would get the overwhelming support of western producers, just as the producers of Manitoba gave overwhelming support to the board marketing oats and barley.

When it is sold on the open market the production of flax is a real gamble. Trying to produce flax at any time is a gamble, but if in addition to the hazards of production you have a widely fluctuating market it makes the production very risky. Last fall I believe the price of flax went up to over \$5 a bushel. A few weeks ago it was down to \$3.50, and I believe it is now about \$3.80. I think it would be much more satisfactory if a reasonably safe initial payment on flax were made by the board, with interim and final payments later as is now the practice in regard to wheat, oats and barley. I am wondering if there is any possibility of such action being taken. Then there is one other point I wish to raise.

**Mr. Howe:** That question has to do with the wheat board act; it cannot be considered under these estimates. The wheat board act comes up for revision next year, and nothing can be done until then. When we are discussing the wheat board act we shall be glad to discuss this subject, but it should not be dealt with on these estimates.

**Mr. Argue:** With great deference to the minister, it becomes very difficult for members to discuss the estimates if they are not allowed to suggest any additions or expansions in the item under consideration. I think it has always been in order to suggest the extension of any item.

**The Chairman:** If any such suggestions are to be made that can be done quite properly on the first item. That is why we have a general discussion dealing with the administration of the department and any measures under the control of the department or the minister. If we were voting the salaries of the justices of the supreme court, for instance, does my hon. friend think he would be entitled to discuss all the judgments those learned gentlemen have rendered?

**Mr. Argue:** I would not say that.

**The Chairman:** Well, here we are dealing with a board and the salaries of that board. The hon. member wants to go into the various decisions they should render, or the service they should perform. I think he should offer those suggestions on the first item, which has to do with the whole department, rather than on this item which has to do with salaries.

**Mr. Howe:** Might I point out that not even the salaries of the board are included in this