

*The Address—Mr. Gardiner*

more particularly to emphasize, however, has regard to the moisture content of the grain. This is a very important matter, and it has become very important to western farmers particularly during the last two years, because of weather conditions. If the House will bear with me for a few moments I will explain the situation. Grain may be given a straight grade provided it does not contain too much moisture. We have nothing in the Canada Grain Act; we have no order in council and no regulation of the Board of Grain Commissioners which determines the percentage of moisture which is allowed in straight grade grain. We have always understood that fourteen per cent was supposed to be the maximum moisture content for straight grade grain, but we found on examination and inquiry that there was no regulation or order in council in force which stipulated that particular percentage. During the last session of parliament we had several interviews with the Board of Grain Commissioners, and when we inquired of them as to how they determined whether or not grain was straight grade in so far as the moisture content was concerned, the chief inspector and the chairman of the appeal board stated that it was determined merely by the inspector feeling the grain, and if in his opinion the grain was fit for warehousing, it went as straight grade. If on the other hand he determined that the grain was not fit for warehousing, it would be graded as rejected, and consequently there would be quite a difference in the price paid. We also received the information from the commissioners that in some years the natural moisture content of grain was much higher than in others; the chairman of the appeal board went so far as to say that in some years the average moisture content ran close to fifteen per cent, and yet that grain would go as straight grade and consequently would be fit for warehousing. The situation to-day seems to be that it is almost impossible for us to set a definite percentage of moisture content for straight grade grain, because of the varying climatic conditions from year to year. Some remedy must be found in order to satisfy the producers of this grain. I noticed a press report some time ago wherein the Board of Grain Commissioners stated that when grain was tested for its moisture content by the appliances at their disposal, anything over 14.4 per cent would go as damp or rejected, yet in the same despatch I noticed that the Board of Grain Commissioners stated that any grain with less than 15 per cent moisture content would be put into storage. Naturally we want to know the reason for the difference.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

If it is possible for the Board of Grain Commissioners or the elevator companies to store grain with a moisture content of less than 15 per cent that grain should evidently go as straight grade. The only remark I wish to make in that connection is that when the Board of Grain Commissioners hand out these rulings, it would be well for them to explain the reasons for them, so that the farmer who produces the grain will know the intentions of the board in that regard. The information they give out is so meagre that the suspicions of the farmer are immediately aroused, and consequently he feels that he is not receiving fair treatment. I hope, however, that the government will give us an opportunity to make representations to them when the question of these amendments comes up.

I now come, Mr. Speaker, to the question of railways. The first point I wish to discuss in regard to the railway situation is with reference to the Hudson Bay railway. We note with a good deal of pleasure that it is the intention of the government to finish the construction of this line, so I hope that at no far distant date steel will be laid to the bay. We believe that this railway, even if it serves only for colonization purposes and to tap the ore fields in northern Manitoba, will be a success. When we come to the question of the development of the port, however, we enter into another phase of the situation altogether; and I feel that the Minister of Railways (Mr. Dunning) has probably done the right thing in securing expert advice before proceeding further. Nevertheless, I trust it is not intended to postpone the time when this port will be equipped with the necessary facilities. We receive many contradictory reports as to the feasibility of the Hudson bay route. Personally I think it is feasible, but if there is any doubt about the matter, allow me to suggest to the Minister of Railways what may provide a possible solution. We have in the Canadian Government Merchant Marine many vessels that are now being held for sale, that is to say vessels that are of no value to the marine service. Some of these vessels have been sold already at a very low price, or at a price which is insignificant when compared with what they cost the country. Would it not be possible for the government to take one of these ships and send it up into Hudson strait, the point where it is important there should be an investigation, run the vessel each summer for a certain period, and find out the exact situation in regard to ice-flowing through this strait. By adopting such a plan as that we can get some authentic information, and I trust it will be of a nature