

be spent in the usual way; but it is a loan properly provided for and secured, and it will be repaid.

I would ask the minister to be good enough to give to the committee a brief explanation as to how this money will be expended. If I remember correctly, the harbour board on the previous occasion submitted their plans and proposals to the government, and after they had been approved, the money was expended on a definite programme.

I also wish to make reference to a very important matter, one which I am sure will be of interest and which has already been referred to by a number of the hon. members from the western prairie provinces, and that is, the total inadequacy of the facilities at the port of Vancouver for handling grain from the prairie provinces. I think it was in the year 1913, or 1914, that an elevator was constructed. No grain moved that way for several years, and there was a question in the minds of some whether or not the previous government had acted wisely in constructing this elevator. But there was a definite reason why the elevator was not used, and I think it will be well to make a brief explanation on that point, and also to point out the requirements at the present time. The reason the elevator was not used to any great extent was simply this—that owing to the war there was no tonnage on the Pacific; practically all the tonnage, with very few exceptions, was taken over from the Pacific ocean to the Atlantic for war purposes, so that there were no shipping facilities. On the conclusion of war, however, and with the readjustment of tonnage after the war, grain commenced to go westward and in the last two years there has been an increasing flow of grain in that direction. Last year, owing to the congestion at the port of Vancouver, a permit or embargo system had to be inaugurated at Edmonton and Calgary. That is, cars were not allowed to go forward unless the elevator was clear, and there was opportunity to handle the cars and transfer their contents to the shipping. Now, this meant that there was difficulty in handling wheat by that route. There was another difficulty, and that was in handling damaged, smutty or tough wheat. There were no facilities at the coast at that time for cleaning, drying and treating damaged grain. Very often bins would be occupied with grain more or less damaged in one form or another, thus curtailing the capacity for storage. Provision has been made to remedy this by the installation of cleaning and drying plants in connection with the elevator. This year—and

[Mr. Lapointe.]

this is what I wish to point out particularly to the minister, and I know I am appealing to sympathetic ears—there was such a flow of wheat directed to the Pacific coast, arising from purely sound, economic reasons, that the congestion was not only marked but became quite startling, and again they had to inaugurate the embargo system and only ship grain that way by permit. Up to about a week ago nearly eleven million bushels of grain had been shipped by the Pacific route, and had there been storage capacity sufficient to handle what was offered there the amount would easily have been doubled. That route, as we know, is open the year round, and upon the closing of the eastern route there would be a continuously increasing amount flowing westward.

Another point I wish to make is this: Doubt has arisen in the past as to the wisdom of installing extended facilities there, and this question has presented itself—that the facilities would only be used during the closed season. I would draw the attention of the committee, and of the minister, to the fact that right from the opening of the grain season, that is, right from the commencement of threshing operations on the prairies, grain has flowed westward, thus fully demonstrating that the route had certain definite advantages to all the sections of the prairies lying westward of a line drawn approximately between Prince Albert and Regina. What I wish to call the attention of the minister to is this: At a very moderate cost the existing elevator could be increased in capacity by about two million bushels, the present capacity being 1,250,000 bushels. The working house, the conveyors, and the other paraphernalia necessary to handle grain effectively and rapidly are all there. By the increase of the storage capacity by, say, another two million bushels we could meet, in a slight degree at least, the congestion which occurred this year and last year. I do not know whether the minister contemplates to do that work out of this \$5,000,000. I understand that the elevator which originally was built by the government,

under the Grain Commission or 4 p.m. Department of Trade and Commerce, has been turned over to the harbour board for operation, and, indeed, I believe, for ownership, by them. The harbour board, I understand, pay a certain sum into the exchequer for this transfer. If the minister would be good enough, when he is speaking, to explain the exact state of this elevator at the present time, and the intention in regard to the increasing of its capacity, we would appreciate that information.