

amount above that went to the government elevators.

Mr. SALES: Does my hon. friend intend to deal with the question of the weighmasters?

Mr. STEVENS: Yes, but the point I was referring to in connection with the particular matter under discussion was this: The elevators encouraged their superintendents in this practice by paying a premium on the amount of overages they created; and it has been indicated in the report to which I have referred that there is a question whether or not weighmasters have not been tampered with. I am not in a position to make any charge against the weighmasters that they have been tampered with, but the thing was cited in the report and reference was made to it.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): An amendment to the law has cured that practice pretty well, has it not?

Mr. STEVENS: The condition has probably been ameliorated. As a matter of fact I am informed on very good authority—and I think I am pretty well within the realm of accuracy when I say this, because I recall one case in particular—that a new practice was adopted. That was to fill a car with grain, and put about three or four inches of screenings on top and ship it away from a particular elevator as screenings. One car in particular that I recall was misdirected and discovered in that condition, showing that the elevator had more than the quarter of one per cent allowed and was getting rid of it by collusion with another party. However, I am not desirous of emphasizing that point. The point I want to make in the case of both the screenings and the overages is, that in any amendments to the act the right of the original vendor of the goods ought to receive the most care and consideration, and that the elevator should be treated on principle as a common carrier the same as the railways or the steamship companies.

Mr. McTAGGART: I should like to know what the hon. member would suggest with regard to shrinkage. Would he allow the elevator a certain percentage of shrinkage on grain going into store?

Mr. STEVENS: No. I would say to the elevator just as I would say to anybody else who handles goods in trust: It is up to you to handle the goods so that there will be as little shrinkage as possible. As a matter of fact, from experience, the amount of shrinkage is small, and the elevators should cover

it just as a railway company covers its shrinkage claims right along.

Mr. SALES: There are thousands of dollars owing.

Mr. STEVENS: Then there is an undoubted right of claim.

Mr. SALES: They never pay them.

Mr. STEVENS: I would not like to say that; I simply say that the duty of preserving the condition of the goods rests upon the elevator, and there are very few cases where there is any great shortage. It is not the business of parliament to provide against shortage. If you did that you might just as well give an unlimited range of overage; it would be just the same only at the other end of the business. I would give them a fair fee for handling the goods and I would hold them responsible.

Now let me refer to the country elevators. One of the weaknesses in the old act is that it makes very little provision for properly controlling country elevators, and I hope that in the new act that point will be suitably provided for. As to the question of inspection and survey board: it is well known that there is a desire on the part of some, and I think it should be given favourable consideration, that when samples are taken for inspection there should also be a sample taken when the car is unloaded for the purpose of checking up when a survey is called for later on, if it should be called for. For instance, many cars are now loaded so close to the roof that it is impossible to get a proper sample from them—it is impracticable, I will put it that way. This condition is a matter of comment and complaint. It is alleged that in the case of many of the cars—in fact the percentage is put as high as forty per cent—it is impossible to get a proper sample for inspection purposes; and in any case there is a good deal of carelessness in this form of inspection. If it was made obligatory to take a sample of the grain as the car was being unloaded—for the purpose of checking in case of an appeal or in case of a reinspection—it would be a good plan. Furthermore there are those who suggest this as well—that there should be a preliminary inspection say at Winnipeg, or at Calgary or Edmonton if the cars are going to the Pacific, as well as a final inspection; a preliminary or interim certificate should be given and then there should be a final inspection at the point of unloading at Fort William or Vancouver.

Mr. BEAUBIEN: When the hon. member advocates treating terminal elevators as com-