

Q. Not intentionally; I cannot see exactly where I have varied it. Let me just ask my question so that there will be no question of variation, variability or shadow of turning.—A. Will you let me explain what I mean?

Q. If you do not mind, I should like to ask my question. I know the question I want to ask.—A. Yes, sir.

Q. I understand that when a country elevator purchases wheat from a grain grower the purchaser has to consider the probable time it will take that wheat to reach the head of the lakes?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And the price which he offers is based upon the price at which wheat sold on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange for delivery at the time when, under ordinary circumstances, the wheat he is buying in the country elevator would reach Fort William?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, the question I ask is, is the price paid as a general thing by the country elevator to the producer a fair and reasonable price, taking these facts into consideration?—A. I would say this, sir, in regard to that, and seeing that you had your opportunity to re-state your case I want to call attention to what happened in the first place. The first question was, are the country prices based on something? I said yes. Your second is, are they fair? They are really two questions. I would say this, that for the whole of the past season—and by the way, I do not want to be in the position of blowing our own horn—we have not thought they have been just as fair as they might be. When I say “we” I mean our own organization. We have put out an official prices list running two cents, and sometimes over, better than the prices lists used by the other companies, but because of that I am perfectly satisfied that at competitive points—that is to say, where we are in or where our prices are effective or influencing the surrounding country—they have paid the same price. In other words, they have been exceeding their own official list. I think that will answer your question as to whether or not the prices are fair. The prices we have paid we regard as fair. They have been slightly higher than those offered by the general run of the trade, at points where we were not represented.

*By Mr. Sales:*

Q. Will you explain about these lists to which you have referred?—A. I do not know, Mr. Chairman, where we are getting to in connection with the Wheat Board, but the facts of the matter are that very many of the companies—I do not know just how many, but certainly in so far as the volume of business is concerned they represent a very large percentage of the balance of the elevator companies, I mean the private companies—have some form of association which furnishes each of their elevators with an official prices list, agreed upon, I believe, by some Committee amongst them; but remember, there are some companies not in that. I think perhaps some of our mills are not in them, we are not in this organization, and they may put out their list but it can be influenced by a certain amount of competition.

*By Mr. Morrison:*

Q. Mr. Riddell, are there not points where a fair price is not paid by the elevators, by some of the line companies, where they have been getting competition to contend with? Is there not too wide a spread to call it a fair price?—A. That is really a question I have previously answered. In so far as our organization is concerned we have paid higher prices than the—

Q. But there are some of the old line companies which have not paid a fair price because they were not subject to competition—a very wide spread?—A. As to that, I think the thing to do would be to—

Mr. WARNER: I would like—

Mr. McMASTER: Ask him whether last year there was the difference between his admirably managed company and the organized people.

[Mr. F. W. Riddell.]