

Supply—Trade and Commerce

Board of grain commissioners—

445. Operation and maintenance expenses, \$3,-594,148.

Mr. Charlton: I should like to ask the minister how many government grain elevators are rented to private grain companies or private individuals? What is the rental of those various elevators that are rented, and what is the amount of storage charges paid to the various companies over the crop years that the elevators were rented to them?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): The board of grain commissioners only has one elevator rented. The national harbours board has certain elevators that are rented, but I have no information about harbours board elevators. If the hon. member would like information about the Port Arthur elevator, I can see what I have here.

Mr. Charlton: There is only one government owned elevator rented?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I did not say that. I said there is only one elevator under the direction of the board of grain commissioners and operated by the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Charlton: How are the other government owned elevators operated?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): The national harbours board, I think, operate all the others not operated by the board of grain commissioners.

Mr. Castleden: When did the new assistant grain commissioner, appointed this year, start his duties with the board?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): On the date in the order in council; I think it was March 11.

Mr. Fleming: I have a couple of questions with regard to the details on page 539 of the estimates concerning two items. About the fifteenth item down, we see "grain samplers"; the item under this heading last year is eliminated and now we have a new item, "grain samplers, seasonal". The appropriation for this year of \$556,080 appears to correspond roughly with the total of last year's appropriation for 132 grain samplers and 69 grain samplers, seasonal. Then, if we drop our eyes down about another ten items, we have similar change. Where last year there were 44 grain trackmen, under the new appropriation for this year there are 66 grain trackmen, seasonal. The appropriation of about \$180,000 corresponds roughly to last year's total for grain trackmen, of whom there were 44, and grain trackmen, seasonal, of whom last year there were 41. I presume the explanation will be the same for each of these items. Is it just a change of name, as the classification implies, or is there any change in the method

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of handling being set up that is reflected in the change of name and in the designation of the item?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Well, I cannot say other than that the work of samplers and trackmen is largely seasonal. It may have something to do with contract arrangements with the employees' association, but I cannot say. It is simply a change in classification. Where some were regarded as not seasonal and others seasonal, now they are all seasonal.

Mr. Fleming: Yes, but I am just wondering about the effect that may have on the status of some employees. It is quite apparent that the groups in these two classifications, some of whom were seasonal and some of whom were not regarded as seasonal, are all to be regarded as seasonal. I am wondering how this is going to affect the status of employees of the board who may have been employees for quite a long period? There might be something more to it than just a change of name.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I cannot say. We have not any expert here who can give us the answer. I will be glad to look into it, and if there is any injustice in regard to it I shall try to correct it. I am afraid I cannot give the information.

Mr. Charlton: I am not sure as yet as to the answer the minister gave me about the government owned elevators. If I understood correctly, he said one of the government owned elevators not run by the harbours board is rented—just one elevator rented?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes.

Mr. Charlton: That is erected and run by the board of grain commissioners?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes.

Mr. Charlton: And the rest are run by the harbours board.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): There are two different sets of elevators. There are a series of terminal elevators built by the government back in 1913, 1914 and 1915. These were built for the account of the board of grain commissioners and were operated by the board of grain commissioners for a time. Later, one of the elevators, namely the elevator at Port Arthur, was leased to a grain company.

There are other elevators that are built by the harbours board throughout the country and are operated today by the national harbours board. They include elevators like Churchill, Port Colborne, and Prescott, and the elevators at Montreal and Halifax.