

Mr. KNOWLES: From individual farmers?

Mr. BURRELL: Yes, or from elevators—from all the sources from which grain is usually obtained.

Mr. KNOWLES: Under what rules, instructions or limitations was it bought? To what extent was the public given information that supplies of wheat and oats were desired for this purpose?

Mr. BURRELL: The whole western country was thoroughly apprised, through the press and through circulars, of all the proceedings of the commission.

I am pretty sure that amongst grain men in the West, they were pretty thoroughly known. I am sorry I did not give my hon. friend the satisfaction of seeing the bunch of letters we received from various municipalities in the West expressing the utmost gratification at the benefits derived from this whole transaction. One letter, which went into the whole matter, was signed by the secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers. If my hon. friend is really interested, I shall be glad to get from the department a complete report of the transaction.

Mr. KNOWLES: How many bushels of wheat and how many bushels of oats did the commissioners buy in all?

Mr. BURRELL: Between 600,000 and 700,000 bushels of wheat, and between 200,000 and 300,000 bushels of oats.

Mr. KNOWLES: They paid money for the grain and then they would sell it and use the same money over again?

Mr. BURRELL: Yes.

Mr. KNOWLES: The money did not go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada.

Mr. BURRELL: It went in as fast as necessary. All the money has been paid back.

Mr. KNOWLES: The money received from the sale of this wheat did not go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund?

Mr. BURRELL: It went into the hands of the Receiver General.

Mr. KNOWLES: I thought the minister told the hon. member for Edmonton (Mr. Oliver) a moment ago that a large sum of money was not needed, because the commissioners used the money as they went along.

Mr. BURRELL: I will not be positive as to the details, whichever way the money went, whether enough was got from time to time in order to buy grain, and then as the wheat was sold, all the money went to the Receiver General, or whether a portion was used again as the transaction went on.

Mr. KNOWLES: Of course, \$500,000 is not anything like sufficient pay for 600,000 bushels of wheat, and 200,000 or 300,000 bushels of oats.

Mr. BURRELL: About \$1,200,000 was used altogether.

Mr. KNOWLES: We are voting half a million. Was there a former vote?

Mr. BURRELL: I will not speak positively about that at the present moment.

Mr. KNOWLES: We cannot honestly and conscientiously pass these Estimates until we know whether this is the whole appropriation or not.

Mr. BURRELL: If my hon. friend wants to let the item stand, all right.

Mr. KNOWLES: I do not want to dictate as to whether the item should stand or not.

Mr. OLIVER: If the minister can buy \$1,200,000 worth of grain with \$500,000, the sooner he is made Minister of Finance the better.

Mr. BURRELL: I did not say that.

Mr. MACDONALD: I can understand the Government entering upon a project of dealing in seed in cases in which there is a shortage or some particular necessity, but apparently the situation is this: The Government went into various parts of the Northwest and purchased seed grain, had it cleaned, and then sold it again. That may be a good thing to do, but why could not that matter be left to private enterprise? Is the Government going into the seed business in normal times throughout this country? Usually intervention of a Government in regard to matters of that kind arises when there is some peculiar local necessity. Here the minister admits frankly that there was no necessity. There is no reason why the individual farmer could not buy the grain in the Northwest just as well as the Government could buy it. If my hon. friend were introducing some new kind of seed from some other part of the world I could understand the reason for the intervention, but upon what possible basis are we going to have, in perfectly