

Mr. BROWN: I would not like to suggest that that is the only reason why they asked for a temporary Board.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Is it a reason?

Mr. BROWN: I would not even suggest that it is a reason. I would suggest, however, that we recognize it might be easier to convince the people of Canada to create a temporary institution than a permanent one.

Mr. ROBINSON: I want to state that so far as I am concerned, and so far as every one else associated with the Canadian Council of Agriculture is concerned, so far as I know, we are perfectly sincere in asking for this as a temporary measure. From certain sources outside of the farming public certain questions have been raised, and I may say that many people state: "It is all right; you are simply fooling yourselves. Any Wheat Board would have been a success when prices were going up. You are giving the Wheat Board credit that is not due to them." And you are giving the Wheat Board credit. I want to state frankly that to my mind it was a serious mistake that they did not continue the Wheat Board for another year when, in the ordinary course of events, prices would decline. By handling the grain during the upward trend and also during the downward trend, the farmers would be in a position to say definitely whether in their opinion it was as good a thing as they thought it was.

Mr. GARLAND: Is it not a fact, in connection with the question you have just been asked as to why the Wheat Board is being asked as a temporary measure, that the producers of grain and the Council of Agriculture are looking to normal conditions to build up something of a more permanent character, but that they cannot do so in the meantime, and they are asking for this to tide them over until they can?

Mr. ROBINSON: That is perfectly true.

Mr. McMURRAY: Under this scheme is it proposed to pool all the grain, to pool the freight rates?

Mr. ROBINSON: No.

Mr. McMURRAY: It does not embody that at all?

Mr. ROBINSON: We are asking for the re-establishment of the Wheat Board along lines similar to that under which the former Board operated. A certain price was advanced to the farmers but that price varied according to the trade rate. There was no pool of freight rates so far as I know; but there was a pooling for the price.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: You made the statement that the farmers had had experience of the Wheat Board and were perfectly satisfied with the way in which it was operated.

Mr. ROBINSON: I made the statement that every farmer I had met in Saskatchewan and Manitoba was outspoken in his desire to have it re-established, and I have not heard a single complaint from any one of those farmers whom I have seen personally. I have read a letter in this city from a farmer in Saskatchewan objecting to it, but I feel certain that if a plebiscite was taken from the three western provinces within a week the majority in favour of the re-establishment of the Wheat Board would be immensely larger than the majority obtained by any hon. member of this House when he stood for election.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I took down your words. They were that the farmers had had experience with the Wheat Board and were satisfied.

Mr. ROBINSON: I do not recall whether I said that; if I did not, I would say it now. That is the view of the farmers I have personally talked with.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: What would you say in reply to the charge that the Wheat Board was asked for with the view of keeping down the price of wheat?

Mr. ROBINSON: That impression was very prevalent at the time the Board was appointed and shortly afterwards. I do say that the farmers were prejudiced and

[Mr. James Robinson.]