

Canadian Wheat Board Act

Brockville the Canadian federation was also divided. There they debated a resolution requesting that the statement be inserted in this bill that it was designed solely in the interests of the grower of coarse grains. The meeting was divided, and the matter was hushed up. However, I shall leave that for the moment, but as I assured my hon. friend a moment ago I shall come back to it later.

I now return to wheat. I admitted frankly the grievance against the line elevator companies, the just claim and real grievance. Then what happened? Obviously there was an endeavour on the part of the farmers collectively to look after themselves. That is just history in its good common sense. Then we had the wheat pools formed. I have read and heard much as to who were the fathers of the wheat pool. Well, maternity is easily proved, but to prove paternity is still one of the most difficult problems in human endeavour. But I say I know the father of the wheat pools. He was a little chap from Chicago by the name of Aaron Shapiro. I was fortunate enough to be in Regina and attend his first meeting, and I heard him again in Calgary.

Mr. WRIGHT: Who invited him there?

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): I can tell you that, too. He invited himself and you fell for it. You paid him, too, I am sure, because he has never done anything yet without being paid for it. After he got through with you, he went back to Dearborn and sued Henry Ford for libel damages in the largest amount ever heard of, and got the biggest settlement ever heard of for a libel action. Then he got into a little bit of trouble with the authorities in Chicago and sort of got the worst of the deal, perhaps for the first time in his life.

Well, then we had the pools. What is their history? I am not saying one thing against them; but it is history that in 1929, when they refused to use the existing facilities in Winnipeg for handling grain, they went broke. They were bankrupt. So they got the governments of the three prairie provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, to guarantee their indebtedness. May I quickly add that this indebtedness is either fully discharged or in the course of being discharged.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Their indebtedness was due to overpayment to the farmers.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Their indebtedness, as my hon. friend says, was due to
[Mr. Smith (Calgary West).]

overpayment to the farmers; in other words, I gather he means due to the stupidity of the management.

That was the history up to that time. After that we had a wheat board, a voluntary board which, of course, I favour, always have and I trust always will. Here is something where I think my hon. friends will agree with me. The wheat board was constituted as an agency to help the man who grew the grain to get a price for his product. But what has happened in this country is this, that certainly since 1943, by action taken by this government, the wheat board has functioned not for that grower, but as a price fixing agency to hold down the price. I make that statement without fear of contradiction from anyone.

I now turn to some statements made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) when he spoke about this matter before the Christmas adjournment. He quoted what had been said by the hon. member for Provencher and, I think, was endeavouring to show that the Canadian farmer over a certain period of years had done better than the United States farmer in a similar position; or at least that he had done as well, or nearly as well. I do not know the minister's exact words, but I shall put it in that way.

Mr. GARDINER: Within not more than thirty-seven cents in 1946.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): I was going to put it lower than that; but thank you so much for the admission. I can quite see that the minister is in a much more receptive mood than when last year he was sitting over there and I endeavoured to get him on my bandwagon—and he nearly came. But tonight he is pushing up the sawdust trail; he does not even need an invitation.

What they have done is this. Anyone who knows anything about the wheat business knows that in making comparison between wheat in Canada and wheat in the United States we must not overlook the fact that 80 per cent of the United States crop is soft wheat, and only 20 per cent is wheat comparable with that grown in this country; and that portion comes from the northwestern states.

The point I make is that it is incorrect—that is the word I shall use—to make comparisons with respect to individuals, from a total return, when the product is so entirely different. The only way one can make that comparison is to take a place on the international boundary line. The sections or quarter-sections on this side run from the 45th parallel, which is the boundary line. Here,