

has a right to take a portion of the goods it handles, any more than the railway has. Let us lay that down as a principle. Now I come to the point my hon. friend raises. The point he raises is this—and this is the only defence the elevator can offer. The elevator argues: But we sometimes make a shortage. Now I checked up these shortages—I took the Price-Waterhouse report which was put in the possession of the House some years ago,—and I have checked up dozens of others since, and I find that the percentage of shortage is infinitesimal compared with the overage; it is a mere atom, as it were. I say: Give to the elevator a fair rate of remuneration for the service it renders. I think that rate is pretty good now; as a matter of fact, if I recollect correctly, the average earnings of the elevators at the head of the lakes, without overages, was something like thirteen per cent per annum over a period of years, and if you take away the advantages from screenings it was in the neighbourhood of nine per cent, showing that they were making a fair earning without these extra advantages; and some of them made an earning of one hundred per cent on the capital invested when overages were included in their revenue. I say this: Let the elevator have a fair return for the service it renders, for elevating, storing, handling, insuring, and so forth, the grain. But the moment you say to an elevator or to any common carrier that in order to provide against loss it is permissible for them to take a portion of their cargo or their storage, and that is exactly what the elevators have been doing the last two or three years, and we have been encouraging them so to weigh the grain—I will come to the weighmaster's part of this transaction in a moment—that there would be an overage at the end of the year—it was revealed, it is all on record before this House, that some of the elevators actually paid their superintendents a salary plus a percentage of the overage that they created, thus putting a premium upon extracting in some way or other a portion of the grain that did not belong to them—

Mr. FORKE: Was that actually demonstrated?

Mr. STEVENS: Yes, it was actually demonstrated; it is part of the records of this House.

Mr. KELLNER: What records?

Mr. STEVENS: The Price-Waterhouse report to which I have referred. There is no question of it whatever. I have mentioned it time and again in the House, not in the [Mr. Stevens.]

last couple of years, because this subject has been sub judice during that period.

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): I do not think that is correct, that the Price-Waterhouse report was laid on the table.

Mr. STEVENS: It was laid on the table of the House in 1919. I handled it myself, and worked on it myself, a nice leather-bound report of about 125 sheets of foolscap, comprising the most complete report I have ever seen.

Mr. KENNEDY (Edmonton): Was it available to the public?

Mr. STEVENS: Just the same as any other document is available to the public. For instance, any member or the newspapers could see it; anyone who wanted to could see it.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I think it never was printed.

Mr. STEVENS: It was not printed because it was a very voluminous report, and nobody asked for it to be printed. On the occasion referred to I cited these points regarding overages, and I think that in the contemplated revision of the Grain Act care should be taken that this system of encouraging the creation of overages shall be definitely stopped.

Now, there is the question of the country elevator—

Mr. HOEY: Before the hon. member departs from that point, in view of the inevitability of overages would he consider that the fees derived therefrom should be confiscated?

Mr. STEVENS: I would have them turned over to the government—at least I would have them made use of to reduce the cost of handling this trade. That is what I would do with them. I moved a motion in the House six or seven years ago that \$15,000,000—which according to a calculation made that year, prior to the passing of the amendment to which I referred, was illegally extracted from the grain growers of this country—should be returned to the treasury of Canada.

Mr. GOULD: Was not such a provision incorporated in the law and disallowed by judgment of the Exchequer court?

Mr. STEVENS: No, I do not think it ever was. As a matter of fact I think the only change in the law made in regard to it was that we legalized the creating of an overage of a quarter of one per cent, and any