

concerned, they are asking for the Wheat Board because they are convinced that it is the only measure that will meet the situation at the present time. At the time that this Stewart-Ridell report was drafted the situation was not nearly so acute as it has been since; yet this is what the report has to say as to the different methods:—

“In the first place, we believe that the most perfect form of a centralised wheat marketing agency, at the present time, can be created only under the control of a national organization. And, secondly, we believe that in considering any form of wheat marketing pool, involving less than complete national control, one based upon voluntary co-operative effort on the part of the producer is preferable to one bound by the provisions of a legal contract.”

They state very clearly that they believe that the most perfect system at that time would have been under a national organization. One crop year has passed since this report was issued; that is, one crop has been marketed, and the situation is more acute than it was at that time. Yet that is the opinion of the two men who are in a position to study the question as fully as it is possible for any one to do.

An hon. MEMBER: Would you read the last part of the paragraph?

Mr. MAHARG: The last part gives their opinion as to the other two systems spoken of some time ago. (Reads):—

“Secondly, we believe that in considering any form of wheat marketing pool, involving less than complete national control, one based upon voluntary co-operative effort on the part of the producer is preferable to one bound by the provisions of a legal contract.”

If that was to be done, they believe that the voluntary pool would be better than the legal contract that has been put in operation in some other places; that is, a binding contract compelling you under penalties to deliver your grain to the pooling organization. It draws the distinction between those two methods, entirely separate from the national system of marketing. They simply state that the national system is preferable, and they then give their opinion as to the two other systems if national marketing is not permitted.

There is one other matter to which I would like to refer. That is the purchasing power of the west. I am not sure whether we all realize the position of the farmer so far as providing a market for the general products of our Dominion is concerned. I think I am quite safe in saying that the prosperity of the different branches of trade in all the provinces of Canada is largely bound up with the success of the farmers of the three western provinces. I do not think that any one province escapes that condition. We can take those of you who represent British Columbia. I am fully satisfied that you have recognized in the past the importance of the purchasing power of the three Prairie Provinces, so far as you are concerned, in the marketing of your chief products, which are lumber and fruit, and early vegetables to a large extent, but particularly lumber and fruit. The situation in the west has been such during the past two years that there has practically been no building so far as the farmers are concerned; practically none; and so far as the purchase of other commodities is concerned—apples in particular—I would just like to give you an experience as related to me by a merchant in one of our western towns in the fall of 1920. When the market opened in the fall of 1920 there was a small amount of wheat sold at a very good price. This gentleman outlined to me the situation in which he found himself. When the farmers started marketing their grain they were obtaining a very good price, and their purchases from him were, while not in wholesale quantities, in unbroken packages, if I may use that expression. They purchased their apples by the box, and their sugar by the twenty pound sack or possibly by the one hundred pound sack, and so on, in preparation for the winter. In the course of two or three weeks, however, that

[Mr. J. A. Maharg.]