

would not be able to get any seed grain at all. Machinery was put in force under provincial statute enabling the municipality to advance money on behalf of the farmer who could not afford to pay. We sold to the municipalities about 600,000 bushels of grain.

Mr. MACDONALD: Was there not a vote last year for the purpose of purchasing seed grain?

Mr. BURRELL: No, that was in connection with a different matter altogether. This action was taken for the purpose of selling high-class seed to farmers who might not otherwise be able to get it.

Mr. OLIVER: Has this money been almost entirely repaid by the farmers?

Mr. BURRELL: The whole of it has been repaid.

Mr. KNOWLES: Was it done in the same way that the seed grain was distributed in former years, by taking a lease on the land?

Mr. BURRELL: No. Our expert officers bought the seed; it was re-cleaned, bagged and made ready for sale to municipalities and farmers.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Why was it necessary to advance this sum of money by Governor General's warrant? It seems to me that this was an extraordinary step to take, especially when Parliament was in session.

Mr. BURRELL: My recollection is that this action was taken either during the recess or before Parliament met. I think that it must have been during the recess.

Mr. SINCLAIR: It seems to me that Governor General's warrants are resorted to with very little provocation in these times.

Mr. KNOWLES: Is this a new expenditure, or is it supplementary to an insufficient vote made last year?

Mr. BURRELL: It is absolutely new work, never undertaken before.

Mr. KNOWLES: Parliament remained in session last year up to a time that must have been subsequent to the activity of the farmers in getting seed grain ready.

Mr. BURRELL: I am sorry that I cannot give the exact date. I hope that my hon. friend has not any suspicion in connection with this matter, because we have an absolutely clear record in it. The conditions were such that it was very desirable, especially in these times of needed production, that the farmers in the West should have a

[Mr. Burrell.]

supply of first-class seed. There must have been some obvious reason for getting the Governor General's warrant; otherwise we should gladly have come to Parliament for the money.

Mr. OLIVER: How did the minister buy the \$1,500,000 worth of grain if he had only \$500,000?

Mr. BURRELL: As fast as we bought grain and sold it, the money was turned in.

Mr. COPP: Was this grain supplied generally throughout Canada, or only throughout the West?

Mr. BURRELL: The provisions for its distribution were applicable everywhere, but only oats were taken in the East. Something like 200,000 bushels of No. 1 grade oats were shipped from the West on order by carload lots to Governmental authorities, municipalities, individual farmers or dealers.

Mr. KNOWLES: How much is now on hand?

Mr. BURRELL: I cannot give the exact figure; I think about 40,000 or 50,000 bushels.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Where is it?

Mr. BURRELL: In the Government elevators in the West.

Mr. KNOWLES: Where was it bought?

Mr. BURRELL: It was bought through the Seed Purchasing Commission, the details respecting which I laid on the Table when the main estimates were under consideration. This commission was composed largely of our own expert officers in the seed department.

Mr. KNOWLES: In the multiplicity of commissions, this one may have got lost. Personally, I never heard of this Seed Purchasing Commission. Will the minister tell us something about it?

Mr. BURRELL: Mr. Wilson was at the head of the commission; he is a very well known man in the West. The grain was bought all over the country, wherever the best grain could be secured under the best terms. It was sent to the Government elevators, cleaned and bagged; then it awaited orders from different municipalities and farmers.

Mr. KNOWLES: Was it bought in the prairie West?

Mr. BURRELL: Altogether in the West.