

sults and more difficult in working out than to have the grain markets opened for a period of one, two or three months, then closed again under legislation and the activities of the wheat board resumed. I would suggest that it would be wise in the interest of all concerned that the Government should reach their decision as to the continuance of the board for another year at as early a date as possible and should make it known to the country so that there would be no uncertainty in regard to the matter.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I quite agree with my hon. friend (Mr. Crerar), in both his suggestions and the Government will pursue that policy. They have ascertained from the trade, as we call it, that if decontrol comes, the middle or latter part of August would be as early as they would care to undertake operations upon the board. Certain preliminary arrangements have to be made if they are to carry on their operations; all the more so because for three years they have been rather out of the full running. The Government are bearing that in mind and the decision will be given at a sufficiently early date to enable them to make all the necessary preparations before the opening of the exchange. We are in a difficult position — there is no doubt about that. Whatever may occur in the future and we cannot quite tell what it will be. But one pretty certain fact is before us. Taking things as they look now, a more than ordinary crop will be raised in the Northwest. Taking things as they appear to us now in the West with coal supplies, railway equipment and transport generally as they are, matters will be none too favourable in the best of circumstances for the rapid and adequate moving of the crop. If the crop is larger than before, greater financial and other efforts must be made to move it and put in force the machinery necessary for moving it. My doubt would be whether, if there was not some guarantee that actual losses would be taken into account by the board and that an adjustment of these losses would be had according to the best opinion of the board, you would get that full effort, enterprise and financial investment in the preliminary operations looking to the marketing of the grain that would be essential and that therefore the farmers might suffer very largely because of that inadequacy. These are some of the things that confront us and it is difficult for any Government to have to face them.

But there is the point of view that the farmer must himself take. He cannot market his own grain individually; it is impossible and it is through the mechanism, either of normal business methods or of the wheat board, that he can hope financially or otherwise to get his grain moved, get it into the hands of the consumer and get his return payments. It is those things that must be borne in mind on both sides and we are subject to the uncertainties of the position. I am hoping that it will turn out that if decontrol takes place wheat will not have to be controlled again but one cannot tell. In one sense it might be better if control had to take place that decontrol should not first take place but my view, the view of the Government and the view largely of the business people of Canada and of the farmers may be this. I do not know. It is very difficult when you have 50,000, 60,000, 70,000 or 80,000 to feel that in the aggregate you are in contact with their view. But there is the situation. The Government has to deal with it and it will keep in mind the two suggestions as my hon. friend has given them to us.

Mr. ROBB: The minister now is making provision for the eventuality of possible losses. Supposing that the Government decides to handle the crop; that at the end of the year there is a slump in the market of fifty cents a bushel, and that Canada sustains a loss of \$50,000,000 or \$100,000,000 on account of handling that wheat, is it fair that all the taxpayers of Canada should be assessed for that when, upon the statement of the minister made in the House a few days ago, the wheat board now has on hand a considerable sum of money, not owing to profitable handling but to advances in the market? The experience of those in the trade is that the market is just as liable to go down as to go up. Would the minister consider the wisdom of holding the money now in the possession of the wheat board in trust and making a redistribution when the Government decides to clean up all this handling of the crop and go back to normal conditions? If it is fair this year to give the grower the advantage of an advancing market, surely he should be ready to stand the chances of a declining market next year. What would the minister think about that?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I think that my hon. friend, if he thinks for a moment, will not press that point.

Mr. ROBB: I would like the minister's opinion on it.