

Then, a question arose yesterday, I believe, as to the board disturbing present conditions. It might not be clear to the committee just to what extent that disturbance would be felt. There is only one line of legitimate grain trading that was interfered with during the operations of the board in any way whatever, and that was the exporter. True, the exporter was put out of business, as it were, but it must be remembered that the exporter has nothing at stake, that is so far as capital expenditure is concerned. Many exporters have not a dollar at stake other than their stationery, or the furniture in the office which they occupy. The largest investment, so far as capital investment is concerned, would be in their furniture and fixtures. No other line of legitimate trade was interfered with in any way whatever. The elevator companies carried on their business and were given a fair margin of profit. I know whereof I speak because we are operators ourselves, having probably the largest elevator system in the world, and we handle, I think, more grain than any other elevator system in Canada. We know exactly the conditions, and the business was carried on without any interference whatever. We were given a fair margin; the Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada fixed the charges allowed for handling; the Wheat Board fixed the amount required to take care of overhead charges, and we were not interfered with in any way, except that possibly the profits might have been reduced considerably in some cases. Nevertheless, full provision was made for a fair margin of profit to the trade. There was no objection on the part of the producers to that being done, none whatever.

Then we come to the commission houses. They were left exactly in the same position as they were. They received exactly the same commission charges, and they were relieved entirely of the selling of the grain. They were not put to the expense of getting their grain on the floor and of disposing of the grain at all. When the papers were sent to them for the producer, they just dealt with that exactly the same as before. They sent him out the amount of the advance that the Board allowed and drew on the Board directly for the amount that they had paid to the individual farmer. So that, so far as the commission men were concerned, they were in a much better position than they had been under the open marketing system. They were relieved of all the responsibility of selling the wheat.

There is another group of individuals who would be interfered with to a certain extent, but they are not a necessary adjunct. I refer to the brokers who are carrying on business largely for the speculator. Quite a number of these brokers do a considerable business at times for those who have large quantities of grain to sell, but they are not a necessary part of the trade. The only legitimate portion of the business, that I know of, that would be interfered with would be the exporters. If there is any complaint they might have a just complaint. I am of the opinion, however, that if the exporter is actually at any financial loss through the operation of the Wheat Board, some arrangement might be made to take care of that. There would be no serious objection, I think, from the producers. We do not want to put any man who is doing a legitimate business in a difficult position if it can be avoided; and I do not think that the Board at any time did that except in regard to the exporters. Their business was practically cut off. There are one or two other matters to which I would like to refer in connection with this report of Messrs. Stewart and Riddell. I am quoting from it because these gentlemen are better qualified to state the position than I am. In regard to the different systems of marketing grain that have been referred to during the sittings of this committee and also in the House, it has been mentioned that there were three schools of thought, as one hon. gentleman described it. There was the Wheat Board; the voluntary pool and the system of selling through the co-operative companies. As was stated to you yesterday, there is only one school of thought, so far as the producers of wheat are concerned. There may be an occasional individual who objects to the Wheat Board. I am not quarreling with him; he is perfectly entitled to his own opinion. But so far as the farmers organizations are